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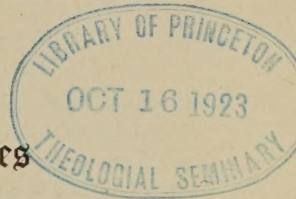
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AND MORALS

VOLUME VIII.



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P R E F A C E .

FOUR new writers appear as contributors to the *Present Day Series of Tracts* for the first time, in the set bound up in this Volume. Mr. Stevenson writes on "The Claim of Christ on the Conscience." Starting from a principle which no one will dispute, viz., that every one is bound to do what he perceives to be right, and obey his highest impulse at all hazards, he proceeds to show in a most convincing manner that the claim which the right, the good, the highest lays upon us is the claim of Jesus. Appealing as it does simply to the moral sense of the reader, and requiring no special information or learning to understand, this Tract is fitted for the widest circulation among the thoughtful and intelligent of all classes.

Dr. Stoughton contributes a Tract on "The Doctrine of the Atonement, Historically and Scripturally Examined." He gives a rapid survey of the development of the doctrine in Christian literature, sums up the results of the review, and applies the Scripture test, appealing to the Old as well as to the New Testament. Christian believers will be instructed and confirmed by reading the Tract, and the minds of those who are perplexed and unsettled on the subject will find the presentation of the truth given in it well-fitted to solve their difficulties, and give clear and sound views of it.

Mr. McCheyne Edgar assumes the fact of the "Resurrection of Jesus Christ," and discusses its significance: he shows its historic, dogmatic, moral, and spiritual value. The Tract is a valuable supplement to Prebendary Row's powerful but purely

evidential discussion of the same theme, and is an important addition to the doctrinal section of the *Present Day Series*. This section now comprises three Tracts. Mr. Arthur's ("The Divinity of our Lord in relation to His Work of Atonement," No. 35), and the Tracts by Dr. Stoughton and Mr. Edgar contained in this Volume.

Dr. Reynolds contributes the fifth Tract to Comparative Religions branch of the Series. The earlier Tracts were on "The Rise and Decline of Islam," by Sir Wm. Muir "Christianity and Confucianism compared in their Teaching of the Whole Duty of Man," by Dr. Legge; "The Zend-Avesta and the Religion of the Pârsîs," and "The Hindu Religion," by Dr. Murray Mitchell. The subject of the fifth Tract of this branch is without doubt the most generally interesting and fascinating of them all. It is "Buddhism : A Comparison and a Contrast between Buddhism and Christianity." The reader will obtain from Dr. Reynolds' discussion a clear view both of the resemblances and differences between the two systems, and be in a position to judge fairly between them. The conclusion to which Dr. Reynolds justly comes, is, that *Buddhism is "an exceeding bitter cry for that which Christianity has to offer."*

The two remaining Tracts in this volume are by writers who have previously contributed to the Series. Mr. Radford Thomson writes on "Auguste Comte and the 'Religion of Humanity';" and Mr. Iverach on "The Ethics of Evolution." These two Tracts form valuable additions to the branch of the Series devoted to the discussion of prevailing non-theistic or anti-theistic theories. The other Tracts in this branch are "Christianity and Secularism compared in their Influence and Effects," by Dr. Blaikie, No. 7; "Agnosticism : A Doctrine of Despair," by Dr. Noah Porter, No. 8; "Modern Materialism," by the late Rev. W. F. Wilkinson, M.A., No. 17; "The Philosophy of Mr. Herbert Spencer Examined," by Mr. Iverach, No. 29; "Modern Pessimism," No. 34; and "Utilitarianism,

An Illogical and Irreligious Theory of Morals," No. 40, by Mr. Radford Thomson.

Mr. Thomson's account of the origin and establishment of the "Religion of Humanity" will be found to be eminently readable and instructive. It is another proof, if any more were needed, that man cannot do without a religion, and also that no religion that man invents for himself can adequately meet his real needs. No man-made religion can ever be a substitute for the God-given religion of Jesus Christ. Mr. Thomson's Tract clearly shows this. Nor can adequate guidance for human life be found in any system that derives morality from the laws of life and conditions of existence. Christian Ethics are the only scientific Ethics. These positions, Mr. Iverach conclusively establishes in his most masterly refutation of "the Ethics of Evolution."

In the Preface to the first bound Volume of the Series, comprising the first six Tracts, it is stated that the purpose of the *Present Day Tracts* is—among other things—

"To show the strong, impregnable foundations of the Christian religion, to *explain and defend its Doctrinal and Ethical contents* . . . that the doubts and difficulties which are felt by so many may be removed, and the faith of Christians may be confirmed."

It is also stated that,

"The unique and divine character of Christianity is made more clearly manifest the more carefully and impartially *its rise, spread, and results are compared with those of other religions*. Rightly understood, its doctrines and ethics commend themselves alike to the enlightened intellect and conscience, and are adapted to the whole nature and life of man.

"None of the non-theistic systems that find favour with so many in the present day can meet man's need or be a substitute for Christianity."

It will be seen from the contents of this Volume that substantial progress has been made in the latest issues in carrying out the plan of the Series.

January, 1887.

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THE CLAIM OF CHRIST
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BY THE

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Argument of the Tract.

THE aim of the Tract is to show the claim which Jesus Christ lays on the conscience. It starts from the fundamental postulate of the conscience, that every man is bound to do what he perceives to be right. Further, that he is bound to obey his *highest* impulse, and to do this at all costs.

I. Jesus lays this claim on man, because He is the manifestation of the highest righteousness. Testimony of John Stuart Mill: no better rule of virtue than "to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." The light in which Jesus shines not human, but Divine. Not to follow Him is to turn away from the best, and to violate one's own conscience.

II. Jesus appeals to the consciousness of moral weakness. The strength that comes from a living person. Man fails not so much in knowledge of what is right, as in moral strength to do it. The moral power of example. Jesus a perfect standard and a never-failing inspiration, because in Him are embodied perfect righteousness, perfect unselfishness, perfect love. This to be accounted for only by His divinity. The Spirit that flows from Jesus not a mere influence, but a living Person, of omnipotent power.

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THE

CLAIM OF CHRIST ON THE CONSCIENCE.

I.



My subject is The Claim of Christ on the Conscience; and if I am to carry my readers with me in what follows, we must have a common starting-point where all agree. That, I think, will be found in this proposition:—That every man is bound to do what he perceives or conscientiously believes to be right. If we acknowledge the reality of moral obligation at all—and I am sure all who read this do so—none will refuse assent to the proposition I have just stated. It will be observed that I do not say every man is bound to do what is right; for that, although true, might remain a very barren and unpractical truth, as the question would still remain—“What is right?” and this it might be impossible for us to agree upon; at least, we should probably have the very greatest difficulty in doing so.

A common starting-point.

The moral postulate.

But the principle I have stated is a much more manageable one, and enables us to avoid a great many controversies:—“Every man is bound to do what he perceives or conscientiously believes to be

We start from the subjective basis.

right." To some of my readers, perhaps, this proposition may have a somewhat suspicious sound, as if it left every man to determine for himself what is right, as if, accordingly, there were no objective right, no right in the nature of things, no right above and beyond man to determine his action, instead of his determining what right is.

But there is
an objective
right.

Now, I do not mean that there is no objective right. I hold very strongly that there is a right eternal as God Himself and firm as the deep foundations of the universe; but if a man is to do the right, he must see it, it must be revealed to him; or, to speak in philosophical language, the objective must become subjective. But because it becomes subjective, it does not follow that there is not the objective reality; on the contrary, without the latter I do not see, in spite of all the elaborate explanations of some philosophers as to how something comes out of nothing, how the former could exist. When a man has eyes and honestly looks with them, I believe he sees realities and not phantoms; and therefore the proposition is a perfectly safe one, as well as the only practical one, that every man is bound to do what he sees to be right.

II.

I go a step further, in which I think all will accompany me, and say that every man is bound to

do the *highest* right which he sees, or to put it in perhaps a better form: *Every man is bound to obey his own highest impulse.* Very often duty presents itself in a comparative or relative shape. We are placed in certain circumstances where we are called upon to act; two or three courses are open to us, any one of which may appear right or at least not wrong—which are we to adopt? I say, a man is bound to choose what conscience declares to be the best, the highest, the noblest alternative—to obey what he feels in the circumstances to be his highest impulse.

A man is bound to obey his highest impulse.

Suppose a case. You meet with some misfortune, and are in pecuniary and other difficulties. An acquaintance, who is under no special obligation to you, comes generously to your aid. He gives you his sympathy, his time, his counsel; pays your debts; lifts you out of your straits, and enables you to start afresh. For all this he takes no bond or promise from you, having in his generosity simply helped you according to your need. By-and-by he gets into trouble himself, is unfortunate in business, and to extricate himself, in an hour of temptation commits the crime of forgery. When you first hear of his difficulties, he is a criminal in prison awaiting his trial. What are you, whom he helped, now to do for him? He holds no bond of yours; you are not very wealthy; have not much more than suffices for your own and your family's com-

An illustration. Duty to an erring friend.

Worldly prudence and unselfish generosity.

fort; it will not favour your public reputation if you profess yourself the friend of a forger, and especially own that you were once under deep obligations to him. And he is a criminal—ought you not to leave him to the tender mercies of the law? Still he once helped you, actually paid a considerable sum of money for you—a sum which, if he had now, might do much for himself or his family. Well, you will pay back that; you will send it to him quietly or to his family, but you will not compromise yourself further; it might give you trouble; it might create suspicion; too heavy demands might be made upon you if you offered your help. Still the thought suggests itself that he did not so deal with you; he did not merely give you a particular sum; he gave you what you needed; he helped you in other ways, just as you needed; should you not now deal as generously with him? should you not now, regardless of consequences to yourself, interpose on his behalf? and by your sympathy as a friend, by your money, your counsel, your influence, help him *in every way that is right* as far as you possibly can? You feel in your conscience that the last would be the noblest thing to do; you perceive clearly enough that if you are to obey your own highest impulse and be true to your highest nature, you ought to help in a generous, self-sacrificing spirit your unfortunate and guilty friend.

The nobler
impulse
should be
followed.

Now, I say, when a man clearly sees the nobler path, his plain duty is to choose the best, to yield to the highest prompting of conscience. Men may have no right to blame him if he acted otherwise. A different course of action might not be objectively wrong, but for him, he fails and stumbles as a moral being unless he obeys the noblest impulse. By acting otherwise he gives a wound to his conscience, and injures his own moral health. He chooses the lower when the higher is presented to him, and he has to pay the penalty in a less sensitive moral nature, and dimmer moral perceptions. The next time he will not be able to perceive the best so clearly, nor have so much of the will or the power to follow it. Every one is bound, if he is to be a true man, a good man, a really moral man, to obey his own highest impulse. Thus only will he advance in the knowledge of what is right and good, and in the inclination and the strength to follow after it.

A man fails unless he obeys the noblest impulse.

III.

BUT, *thirdly*, I take another step, and say that every man is bound to obey his own highest impulse *at all costs*. When a man perceives clearly the thing which is right *for him*, the obligation to do it is absolute. In discharging that obligation, he may have to toil, to struggle, to suffer, or even to die; still, if there is any reality in duty at all,

The nobler impulse should be obeyed *at all costs*.

Not to obey
our highest
impulse is to
deny duty
altogether.

if right and wrong be not a mere matter of convenience or pleasure, either in the objective or subjective sense of the word, all that must be endured; because the obligation is absolute. You cannot stop short of this conclusion, unless by denying the reality of duty altogether. It does not alter the obligation that a man may be mistaken in what seems to him right; it may appear to some an absurdity or even a piece of presumption that a man should die for what may, after all, turn out to be a mistake; no matter, the obligation remains all the same, because the only way in which a man can ever attain to the knowledge of what is right and found himself upon it, is by following at all hazards what, after all honest and conscientious inquiry, reveals itself to him as right. It may, perhaps, seem to some that Christianity, or, let me rather say, Jesus Christ, makes very hard or even impossible demands upon men, when they read in the New Testament such a passage as this:

“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.”¹

The demand
of every
law of
righteous-
ness.

The claim is, no doubt, a very high one, but the truth is, *every law of righteousness makes the same demand.* It is just the expression of the claim of

¹ Luke xiv. 26, 27.

duty. If there is such a thing as right and wrong in the world, if moral obligation has any reality in it, then we *must* do what is right; we must be faithful to what is good and true at all hazards; we must not swerve from the righteous way, though father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, be all against us. We must break with them, oppose them, cut ourselves off from them, rather than break with duty, rather than resist truth, rather than do what we clearly perceive to be wrong. We must be willing even to take up our cross if we cannot otherwise pursue the path of duty, that is, we must be willing to give up our life, to die, and that by the most cruel and shameful death, rather than swerve from what we perceive to be the path of righteousness. If there is any absolute right in the world, that is its inflexible claim.

Moral obligation binds us to do right.

I.

Now, if this is admitted—and I have little doubt the conscience of all will respond to the truth of what I have said—I wish to advance a step further, and to show that this claim which the right, the good, the highest lays upon us is the claim of Jesus.

Jesus makes the claim of the highest righteousness.

This, of course, follows at once if Jesus Christ be, as I believe Him to be, the very embodiment of good, the incarnation of all righteousness, and

Manifestly true, if Jesus is divine.

truth, and excellence, the living manifestation of the highest life, the divine life, in which is all good. If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, in a sense in which no other is the Son of God, the only begotten and perfect Son, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His Person, then He embodies the highest good; for there can be no good apart from Him, since He is one with the very fountain and origin of goodness—God who is good, and besides whom there is none.

But His
divinity not
assumed.

But at present I cannot take this for granted, and I do not wish to make assumptions; my argument is good only if it rightfully claims assent at every step. Now, it will be remembered that in setting out we started with the proposition that a man is bound to follow that which he perceives to be right, which he recognises as the best and highest. This claim I can at once identify with the claim of Jesus, if you acknowledge, what I think is now generally acknowledged by men of candid minds and enlightened consciences, that of those who have ever lived on earth, Jesus Christ is the most perfect Being we have ever heard of, or read of, or conceived of, the fullest embodiment of virtue, the manifestation in character and in action of the best and highest morality ever imagined.

His claim
as the em-
bodiment of
the highest
morality.

Most sceptics even will admit this; men who refuse fully to accept Christianity or to acknow-

ledge the divinity of Jesus Christ, admire and reverence His perfect morality, and acknowledge Him to be, ethically, unapproachable among men. This acknowledgment is enough for my present purpose ; I do not ask any now to decide whether He be the Son of God or not ; we leave that aside in the meantime. I am content with the admission that He is the most perfect of the sons of men : the manifestation of the best and highest good that has ever yet been conceived of. Then His claim is that of the best and highest upon us ; as we are bound at all costs by the fundamental moral law, the first dictates of a living conscience, to obey our own highest impulse, then the obligation lies upon us to follow Him whom we acknowledge to be the best and highest, to yield Him allegiance as our leader, as our moral King, until we have found a better or a nobler.

Sceptics admit his incomparable character.

Let me here call in as a witness to the rightfulness of this claim a man certainly not partial to Christianity—John Stuart Mill. In one of the last pages he ever wrote he thus speaks of Christ :

Witness of John Stuart Mill.

“ Whatever else may be taken from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left, a unique figure not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. . . . Who among His disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or of imagining the life and character

Criticism does not affect Christ's personality.

revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee, as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncracies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source. . . . About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision when something very different was aimed at, must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life. When to this we add that, to the conception of the rational sceptic, it remains a possibility that Christ actually was what He supposed Himself to be . . . a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue; we may well conclude that the influences of religion on the character, which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion, are well worth preserving, and that what they lack of direct strength as compared with those of a firmer belief is more than compensated by the greater truth and rectitude of the morality they sanction."

The best rule of virtue is to secure Christ's approval

In this very remarkable passage it will be observed that Mill acknowledges that "even now it would not be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." These words plainly imply that Jesus Christ is the em-

bodiment of the highest virtue the world has seen or framed in imagination; that even now not even the unbeliever can find a better rule than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life. If then He thus reveals the best and highest—manifests it not merely in word, but in action, in His life and deepest personality, without a flaw and without a stain that man can detect, so that He judges all, but is Himself judged of no man,—on what ground can we refuse to follow Him, to take Him as our moral Captain and King, until at least we have found a better and a worthier? For Jesus is a centre of moral light, the purest and the fullest that shines in the earth. By His entrance into human history He has breathed among men a new moral atmosphere, created a new ethical standard, and quickened the consciences of men to strive after it. No one can say that this light does not shine for him. For Jesus meets men on the level of the deepest and broadest humanity. There is nothing in Him of the narrowness of class, or nation, or age; He stands clear from the prejudices and limitations of His people and His time; He vindicates for Himself the name which He assumed—the Son of Man. He is therefore a guide and leader for all. Not even in idea are we yet able to frame a nobler pattern of humanity than Jesus—nor are we ever likely to be able. Although it is well nigh nineteen centuries since Jesus lived on

Jesus is a
centre of
moral light.

He meets
men on the
level of the
broadest
humanity.

Men's ideals
a reflection
of Christ's
reality.

earth, and nearly as many since the Gospels were written, His light shines as high above men as it ever did, nay, higher; as men under His influence grow better able to appreciate His brightness. The noblest characters in fiction owe their nobility to features borrowed from Him, and yet how far short do they fall of their Archetype? Take, for example, Tennyson's *King Arthur*—his "own ideal knight," and what is he but a partial reflection of the true King of men. The perfect light in truth with which Jesus shines is not of earth, but of heaven, not human, but divine.

To refuse to
follow Him
is to turn
away from
the light.

Now here is the solemn consideration for us—if, when Jesus is thus revealed to us, when our whole moral nature recognises Him as the best and noblest, as the perfectly righteous and pure and holy One, and responds to the innate authority of His Word, His example, His Person; if we yet refuse Him allegiance and turn away from Him, then we turn away from righteousness, we refuse to pursue the highest excellence, we violate our own moral nature, and break its first and fundamental law. To acknowledge Jesus as the best and noblest, to see in Him the embodiment of incomparable virtue, and yet to say—I will not acknowledge Him as my King, I will not own Him as Lord of my conscience, I will not receive His Word, His example, His Spirit as the law and guide of my life, is deliberately to decline from

virtue, to take a path lower than the highest, to choose the worse when the better was within our reach, inviting us, claiming us,—can we say that we are guiltless if we do so, or that we do not deserve the penalty that must necessarily fall upon a soul who loved something else better than righteousness ?

II.

BUT now let me speak of another, and, if possible, a more blessed claim of Christ upon us. He appeals not merely to the sense of duty, but to the consciousness of moral weakness. Christ is not merely the embodiment of the best and highest virtue, laying an obligation on our consciences to own His authority and follow Him, but also a fountain of moral strength to weak and erring men, inspiring them with the will and the power to be virtuous making them aspire after righteousness and purity and moral excellence, and enabling them also to realize it.

Christ appeals to sense of moral weakness.

We have seen that when Jesus Christ calls upon men to renounce all, if it be necessary, in order to follow Him, to take up the cross and come after Him, to be willing to part with father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife and children, yea, and our very lives, in order to be His disciples, He is really laying no heavier claim upon us than is laid by every law of righteousness ; to follow the

The supreme claim of righteousness.

right, however manifested, demands the very same sacrifices, if there be any reality in moral obligation at all, and any meaning and purpose in life; for if we have nothing worth dying for, we have nothing worth living for; the true man must be willing to be a martyr, should circumstances demand it, if he believes in righteousness and goodness at all. The man who refuses to go that length negatives the whole of morality—denies, in fact, the existence of morality in any proper sense altogether.

A person,
not an
abstraction,
makes the
claim.

Now I wish to point out what a blessed and gracious thing it is for us men, that not an abstract morality, not a cold and austere authority, but a living, breathing, loving Person lays the obligation upon us, so that the claim becomes an invitation, and the call to duty an offer of all needed help.

And He says
Come, not
go.

Our King of Righteousness, the Lord of our conscience, does not issue His command, giving bald directions about the way, and saying, Go; but He says, Come, come after Me, put your hand in Mine and let Me lead you on. Hear His own words:

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”¹

Can it be denied that if Jesus gives rest even under the yoke of duty, and makes it easy to meet even the severe claim of righteousness, we find in

¹ Matt. xi. 28-30.

Him help and strength which are to be found nowhere else?

Let us try to see a little in detail how this is so. What we are now seeking for, as, indeed, what we all especially need, is the will and the power to be and to do what is right, the inward impulse and strength to stedfastly follow after and attain righteousness and goodness. We are not now inquiring as to what is right, or how we come to discern it. But suppose we know it, how are we to do it? We are all conscious that we fail in righteousness and in goodness, not so much because we are perplexed about what is right, as because we do not faithfully perform what we know to be our duty. I do not say that it is never hard to know the right course, that we are never perplexed about the path of duty, but I am sure all will agree with me that the world would be infinitely better than it is if men only faithfully walked up to their own standard. We are so weak, so liable to be led astray, so inclined to yield to temptation, that we are constantly stumbling and falling even in a path which we have seen very plainly. Every honest conscience must put its signature to the truth of our Lord's words :

The need of moral strength rather than of knowledge.

The testimony of the honest conscience.

“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”¹

¹ 1 JOHN III. 19.

The bright
goal and
halting
effort.

In our better moments, when the spirit is alive and the conscience awake, we see the ideal bright above us, beckoning us upward, and we feel that to gain that height would be worth any amount of toil and conflict. But we have hardly formed the resolution and begun the effort, when lower impulses assert their force; the spiritual light in the conscience grows dim, the ideal is obscured, and we decline from the path with the bright goal at the end of it. In the gloom which ensues, doubts are apt to arise as to the value of any ideal standard; high aspirations seem fond imaginings; it appears safer and more sensible to be content with a lower plane of living and a nearer goal. The standard which in an exalted moment commended itself to the living conscience is given up for the ordinary level of principle and conduct which is current in the society in which one moves. Most are so weak, in fact, that they are unable to follow the higher impulses which at times they feel; to do so demands more moral strength than they can command. The highest goal is not that which most are seeking; to press toward it implies making a path for oneself, or at least renouncing the companionship of the majority, and the loss of that companionship is what few are strong enough to sacrifice.

The
influence of
society.

Most therefore are content to go just as their neighbours go, and to adopt the current standard,

which is certainly not an ideal one. Yet the ideal does recur at times, flashing its light anew into the conscience, and making the man ill at ease with himself. For it is few who attempt to justify to themselves an un-ideal standard—who deliberately avow a selfish, worldly, material view of life. Such theories are not wanting, indeed; they are to be found under the patronage of so-called art and science and philosophy, attempting to justify the dominance of fleshly and sensual impulses. But most approve the better, even while they follow the worse. What they want is moral power. What an all-important question, then, it is to you—Whence is this moral power to come? I believe I can point you to the best and the only sufficient fountain of it.

The conflict between the ideal and the current standard.

It is unnecessary to dilate on the superiority of the concrete over the abstract, of life over logic, of example over precept or reasoning. In the last case the advantage has become proverbial. Even in matters which men are acquainted with, and where precept would be sufficient to direct, we know how weak it is when example counteracts, and how infectious and irresistible the latter is even in the face of the plainest prohibitions. A parent or a master may give the most approved advice, may be lavish of the best exhortations and prudent counsels; but if his own conduct runs counter to his precepts, there cannot be a doubt which will

The superiority of a living person to an abstract precept.

An art not
learned by
rules.

have the most influence over the child. If one wishes to learn an art it would be folly to sit down to a book of rules—the tyro must be placed under the guidance of an expert.

“The eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and the eyes of a maiden unto the hands of her mistress.”¹

Morality an
art.

In things of which men are ignorant, bare directions would produce only misunderstanding, and misunderstanding would result in abortive failure. Let the regulations be drawn up with elaborate minuteness, and they will only the more mislead and bewilder, until the learner throws up the work in despair. Now morality is an art; the art of living well, living a righteous, a true, and a noble life.

The
difficulty of
acquiring it.

How are we to attain to this art—an art, alas! so hard to practise. For we are in the midst of a world, which, taken as a whole, will not help, but hinder us. Men, it is true, profess to be practising this art in one way or other; but if we have formed to ourselves any ideal of what a righteous, a virtuous, a noble life worthy of the name should be, we must own that the vast majority are but sad blunderers in the art. With most, life seems to be a mere competition, a struggle, if not to live, yet to lay hold for self of as many of the good things of this world as by strength or skill or cunning one can attain. The

¹ Psalm cxxiii. 2.

man most successful in this seems to be an able, prudent, or wise man—a man to be considerably respected and admired, if not envied. If we throw ourselves into the battle of life in this spirit, the tendency is more and more to place one in the attitude for fighting for self alone; sympathy with one's fellows, generous emotions, acts of kindness, may be good in their way, may help to hide the ugliness, and even add to the happiness of life; but they cannot be indulged too far; they must not interfere with the main chance; when the crisis comes a man must look to himself and let other considerations go.

The way of the world.

Now, if this is the prevalent spirit, if this is the art of living that obtains most largely in the world, it is evident that the ideal is not high, that the principle of following the best and noblest is not dominant, and that the man who aims at the latter will have the temper of the world against him, and not for him.

Its ideal not high.

But there is something more to contend with than even this prudent, selfish, ungenerous tone—there is the whole animal nature, the prompting of evil passions, the seductive allurements of vice—all the temptations of the world without appealing to the baser tendencies within, and conspiring to drag men down into the mire and corruption of sensual indulgence and vicious pleasure. Now, suppose we have all this against us, and nothing to

The seductions of the lower nature.

The
weakness of
abstract
morality.

uphold us except the cold intellectual conceptions of an abstract virtue, the stern prohibitions of bare authority, or even the protesting voice of conscience—the categorical imperative of a moral law within, can we feel strong enough to stand against the current of the whole custom and fashion of the world, as well as the winds and gusts of tempestuous passion that sweep across the soul, and make a wreck of every noble resolution and aspiring virtue?

Conflict of
moral
systems.

Those who have studied morals philosophically know how hard it seems to find a sure foundation for virtue at all; how some teachers of repute lay down principles which seem to give the reins to inclination and let it carry men whither it will. Suppose, however, that by hard reasoning the conclusion has been reached that on the whole virtue is good and vice is evil, and justice is better than injustice, that the probabilities are in favour of the old-fashioned morality—can it be supposed that men are well armed in the hour of temptation against the assaults of passion and the seductions of opportunity by such lame and impotent conclusions as these, not to speak of being prepared to struggle upwards and onwards to ideal heights of virtue of which we catch a glimpse in the highest moments of our life? Who does not want a stronger, a more abiding, a more inspiring power than the voice of mere authority or the dictate of an abstract rule would ever give?

Authority
and an
abstract
rule in-
sufficient.

If I wished to ensure a young man's standing against temptation, much more his living a pure and noble life, I would send him forth, not so much with an abstract code of morals, or the cold commands of a superior will, as with the ideal in his heart of a noble father and a pure mother, the very thought of whose presence would be a continual guide and inspiration to him—would warn him off dangerous shoals and rocks, and beckon him onward in the paths of virtue and goodness and all excellence. Their example and the reflection as to what they would think or say or do in any circumstances would have infinitely more power with any human heart than the completest and best-reasoned system of ethics. It is under the deep sense of this that the poet exclaims:—

The power
of a pure
example.

“ Away, haunt not thou me,
Thou vain Philosophy !
Little hast thou bestead,
Save to perplex the head
And leave the spirit dead.
Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,
While from the secret treasure-depths below,
Fed by the skiey shower
And clouds that sink and rest on hill-tops high,
Wisdom at once and power
Are welling, bubbling forth, unseen, incessantly !

Dead theory
and living
power.

* * * * *

Why labour at the dull mechanic oar,
When the fresh breeze is blowing
And the strong current flowing
Right onward to the eternal shore !”

The
inspiration
of a living
spirit.

Yes, it is the fresh breeze we need, the inspiration of a living spirit breathing upon our spirits, if we are to aspire to true excellence, and be saved from sinking in the sloughs of vice, or from being enslaved by the dead customs and narrowing selfishness of the world. We must have an ideal, combining all we can conceive of as truly good and noble, and this ideal embodied in a living reality to give it surety and substantiality, to make it really a power over our hearts, and our imitation of it a possibility. Sometimes we may find such a model and inspirer among those we know—some fellow-man, a relative, a friend, who seems to combine in himself all excellence, and to realize our ideal. While he is this to us, we cannot help following him, imitating him, making him our standard, our universal referee.

The short-
coming of
human
heroes.

But unfortunately, in the case of any ordinary brother-man, the inspiration cannot last. Under his leadership and influence we advance, our thoughts expand, our moral perceptions grow clearer and higher, and the first result is that we discover the defects of our model. Some side of our nature he does not respond to; it may be merely a limitation, but on that side he cannot carry us on; he cannot help us. We look a little closer, and some flaw even appears—some stain of wrong, of selfishness, of unfairness, some base alloy in that which was to us as pure gold. It may not be

much; there may still remain all of nobility we formerly admired, but we see that we expected too much, and that no ordinary brother-man can ever be a never-failing fountain of wisdom and strength to us.

But this One can be—One, who is a brother-man, the nearest and most humane of men, and yet no ordinary brother-man, so that while He meets all our weakness and need, He communicates only help and strength. This man is Christ Jesus. He is a never-failing fountain of moral strength and inspiration, because three things meet in Him, which make Him complete on every side.

The ideal realised in Christ Jesus.

First, *He presents to us a character of perfect righteousness*, He realizes the ideal of perfect goodness, purity, and nobility. Look at Him in whatever light one may, one can find no flaw, no taint, no shortcoming in Him. See how He fulfilled that fundamental moral law with which we set out—of following at all costs the right, the highest. He had just one purpose on earth, to do the will of God, and that purpose He pursued without swerving and without faltering. Straight forward He went in the right path without turning to the right hand or to the left, although He was assailed and tempted on every side. What a narrow, hard, and thorny way it proved! As he pursued, at all costs, the one object of doing God's will, He had to renounce one thing after another

His perfect righteousness.

His self-renunciation for righteousness' sake.

of all that is dear to men—not arbitrarily, not from any self-willed asceticism, but just as duty called Him, just as it was necessary for the fulfilment of His life's purpose. Comfort, home, friends, peace, the respect of His fellow-men, honour, reputation, character, life itself, all He was stripped of; and instead He put on shame, injustice, suffering, bodily anguish and mental agony, until at last, under scorn and cruelty, He suffered a malefactor's death on the shameful cross.

At all costs He did God's will.

Why? Just because He would, at all costs, without reserve and without compromise, do the will of God. And so perfect, so high, so noble was His righteousness, that though it is more than eighteen centuries since His short life came to that sad end, though the thoughts of men have widened, and their moral ideas and perceptions have cleared and heightened in a remarkable measure, chiefly through His influence, that character and that life stand as far above as ever—nay, further, as the stars seen from the mountain tops appear much higher than when viewed from the plain. As man's ideal rises, that reality shines out brighter, clearer, more attractive, and more unattainable, than ever. It is the noblest men who most feel its power, and acknowledge its transcendent, its divine excellence. It wins even the unwilling homage of those who scan it closely to discover, if they can, spots that mar it. That living personality becomes more and

His ideal unattainable.

more the centre of influence, and the cynosure of every eye as the centuries roll on. He embodies a righteousness not merely human but Divine.

Notice, as a second point, although it is, of course, bound up with His perfect righteousness, *His entire unselfishness*. This is a very noteworthy element, as it gives infinite worth, and beauty, and power to His goodness. We know how in our fellow-men, even the very best and noblest of them, there comes a point where self intrudes, exercises a disturbing influence, obscures the perfect clearness of an unbiassed judgment, distorts and disturbs somewhat the absolute justness and serenity of unsullied righteousness and truth. Self, which can never be quite overcome in ordinary men, always adds a petty element, a base alloy to the pure gold of virtuous excellence.

His unselfishness

In Jesus Christ no such marring element is found. Selfishness in any form, of pride or partiality to self, or feigned humility, or desire of honour is not found in Him. His noble declarations regarding Himself, His assertion of His own peculiar greatness, and His unique relation to God, are as entirely free from selfish bias, as the meekest words He ever spoke. His independence, His courage, His unflinching heroism, are as much the outcome of His humility, as His submission to ill-treatment, contempt, and cruelty. He can be judge in His own cause with as perfect serenity

No bias of self.

He is
proved
worthy to
be King
and Judge.

and absence of prejudice as if it had nothing to do with Him. Therefore He has proved Himself worthy to be King and Judge of all the world, and God has exalted Him to be so. Thus His influence never wanes; there is no weak point in all His being; His voice is ever strong in the power of perfect truth; His example ever a standard, an unapproachable and yet an attractive ideal, a glorious light before the eyes of men to lift them above the world, to inspire them with the love of heavenly purity, to show them the way, and draw them on.

His love to
man.

But *thirdly*, this perfect righteousness, and unselfishness are combined with *an infinite and unquerable love to men*. Here is the third wonderful strand of the threefold cord which has been twined to bind the heart of man to righteousness and goodness, and which can never be broken. We can conceive of a perfect righteousness, pure and serene, but far away and cold, still exercising a wonderful influence, and drawing men upwards by the attraction of its excellence. Such a revelation of perfect virtue in a real character might exert a powerful influence, and inspire men with new strength by its pure light, even although it had no warmth of personal relationship. Or, on the other hand, we can easily conceive of a powerful loving nature, drawing man irresistibly to it, and swaying and moulding them, even though it were not a

perfectly righteous nature—nay, had even many defects. How can we estimate, then, the winning, subduing, inspiring power of a character and a personality—a living, breathing, kindly fellow-man, though so far above men,—who combines perfect righteousness, and inexhaustible, unconquerable love?

The union of righteousness and love.

The life of Jesus was not more entirely a life devoted to the doing of the will of God than it was a life devoted to the highest welfare of mankind. And it was just as hard and difficult to pursue the latter as the former. The conduct of men to Him was such that it might well have killed all love and all regard in Him towards His kind, for while He made Himself one with them, their coldness, their injustice, their ingratitude, their scorn, their cruelty were enough to have worn out and extinguished all but an infinite love.

But His love was infinite, unfailing, a love stronger than death. So mighty was it that it led Him to stoop to man's utter need, to take up the burden of the world's evil, to yield Himself as a sacrifice for man's sin on the cross of shame and death. And, therefore that love has a power in it which can never die, and will melt and subdue and bind the hearts of men to Him to all eternity. There is no might like that of love. Love wins love; and when once this noblest passion has

His love stronger than death.

The might of love.

lodged in the heart, it transforms and glorifies the whole nature; it makes the coward brave, the mean man noble, the stammerer eloquent, the churl generous, the selfish man a hero in self-sacrifice; it rouses the dull, makes the waverer stedfast, elevates the ignoble, purifies the gross fleshly nature as with a divine fire. Oh what will not the human heart do under the influence of love; what will it not attain to if only the object of it is pure and noble! But Jesus Christ, who by His infinite sacrifice of love wins the love of men, is the perfectly pure and noble, the embodiment of all excellence. In binding men to Himself, He binds them to all that is just and good, and pure and true. He makes in His own living Person perfect righteousness an object of the deepest love. Thus He makes men enthusiasts in virtue, inspires them with the ravishing love of goodness, gives them at once the will and the power to follow after it, and step by step to attain to it. Said I not truly that Jesus Christ is an unfailing fountain of moral power!

Love as an ethical motive.

The influence of Jesus' Spirit.

But let me proceed a little further: this influence which Jesus Christ exerts upon men, which passes from His heart to our hearts, from His Spirit to our spirits, is an influence that never grows weaker. It is more felt now than ever it was. But this is not the case with the influence of ordinary men: the greatest figures, with the exception of this, may

not grow smaller in the view of lengthening posterity, but more limited, more partial. If their excellencies are seen more clearly, their faults are also more apparent, and hence their influence at the best is but small. But the influence of Jesus both widens and deepens, gathers in strength and volume as the ages unfold themselves. Why is this? It is not only the perfection of His character, but because His influence is not a mere influence. What comes from Him a breathing, living power, is a living Divine Spirit from a living human and Divine Person. For if my argument has been followed with assenting conscience, the reader will hardly stumble now at the idea that Jesus not only was pure and perfect man, but was and is the Divine Son of God. There is no accounting for such a personality as His but on this ground. His spotless character, His perfect righteousness, His lowly inexhaustible love are not human, but Divine. The Gospel history is an insoluble riddle and a contradiction unless we accept the plain account it gives of Jesus, as One who came from God and went to God. So He not only has lived on earth, but lives in heaven; and it is from Jesus in the power of His heavenly life that the Spirit proceeds. It is, therefore, mighty, and pure, and patient, and loving as Jesus was on earth—nay, as He is, and God is in heaven. Man's spirit is but weak and failing, even in the strongest; but the Spirit that

Jesus' influence extends with time.

A living divine Spirit flows from Him.

Jesus the Divine Son of God.

The Spirit
proceeding
from Jesus
an omni-
potent
power.

flows from the risen Lord is the Paraclete, the "other Comforter," whom He promised to send to His disciples, when He should "go to the Father." Thus the influence that flows from Jesus is the operation of an omnipotent Spirit.

III.

How to
enter into
relation
with Christ.

LET me present one other very important and practical truth. Perhaps some of my readers may feel that Jesus Christ could help them, if once they got into personal relation with Him; if they were only started on the path of righteousness, and were *with* Jesus instead of *against* Him. But they feel that the past puts a great barrier in the way, that sin and guilt lie heavy upon them, so that they cannot even enter on the Christian course. But Jesus can say to sin-laden souls now, even as He did in the days of His flesh: "Be of good cheer; thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." The first thing He does for a burdened soul that seeks His help is to lift off the heavy burden and cast it, as it were, into the depths of the sea. He has power to forgive sins, for by His perfect sacrifice of Himself He has made atonement for sin, so that the believing soul may at once start in the full consciousness of freedom which Divine forgiveness gives. Is it asked, how Jesus has the right to

He can
forgive sin

Whence His
right.

speak the word of forgiveness, and to cancel the guilty past ?

Look fairly at the experience He passed through, and I think the answer will be found. The Gospel of St. John says: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;" and when we look, it is the image of a sacrificial Lamb which He presents. For He is innocent and yet afflicted: He is sinless and yet a sufferer. Nay, more, He is afflicted *because* He is innocent: He is a sufferer *because* He is sinless. That was the actual experience of His earthly life. The more faithful He is to God, and the more He spends Himself for men, the deeper is He brought into trouble and suffering. It is nothing else than His righteousness that induces His affliction; it is His devotion to the cause of man that brings on Him hatred and persecution. Thus the pure One, because He is pure, suffers as the vilest; the righteous, for nothing but His righteousness, is treated by man as a malefactor; the just is condemned by the unjust; the Holy One is nailed by wicked hands to the accursed tree. All righteousness seems overturned, and injustice to have seized the throne of earth. In literal fact the innocent occupies the place of the guilty: the lot of the vilest falls on the noblest: the hatred of the world is poured on the heart of the loving One: the curse of the world's evil rests on the head of the most

His actual
experience

A sufferer
because
sinless.

The innoc-
ent in the
place of the
guilty.

blessed. These are the facts patent to all who read the story of the Gospels.

What is the explanation?

Now the question is, What is the explanation of these facts? Is it all a dark fate and an inexplicable destiny? Was Jesus only crushed by the iron wheel of an evil universe, which no controlling hand guides, and no gracious purpose animates? It is manifest that He Himself did not for a moment think so. For He goes forward to meet the cross with His eyes open; He bends His back to the burden willingly; when the bitter cup is put into His hand, He takes it as from the hand of a righteous and loving Father, saying: "Not My will but Thine be done!" He dies neither as a weakling, unresisting, because helpless; nor yet as a lion at bay, defying His murderers to the last; but in calm meekness, in divine self-sacrifice, He yields himself as a lamb to be laid on the altar, in the last hour breathing the prayer of forgiveness even for His murderers. So He gives His pure life a ransom for the guilty, whose place He has taken, because it was the eternal purpose of redeeming Love. Is there any explanation which will suffice but that given by the inspired Word:

His willing sacrifice.

His life given as a sacrifice according to God's purpose.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be

made the righteousness of God in Him." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"¹

Now every sin-burdened soul, looking on that cross, may say:—"Thou, holy Lamb of God, hast taken my place; Thou hast borne my due; Thy heart has been pierced with my sin, and broken with my reproach; Thou hast died where I should have died; and now I live a new life, cleansed by Thy blood, redeemed by Thy sacrifice, quickened by Thy Spirit, for Thy love has won my heart for evermore."

The soul's
submission.

¹ Isa. liii. 5, 6; 2 Cor. v. 21; John i. 29.



THE
DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT
HISTORICALLY AND SCRIPTURALLY EXAMINED

BY THE
REV. JOHN STOUGHTON, D.D.

Argument of the Tract.

CHRISTIANITY based on facts, its doctrines giving an explanation of the facts. The Atonement explains the Crucifixion.

I. History of the doctrine as developed in Christian literature. Earliest teaching on the subject, religious rather than theological. Nicene opinions. Those of Augustine; of Hilary; other Fathers; Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. Calvin *v.* Grotius. Views entertained by Anglo-Catholics and Puritans. Modern theories.

II. Results of the review: (1) Importance of the subject; (2) Room for censure; (3) Modern inquisitiveness; (4) Influence of human authority; (5) The mystery of the Atonement.

III. Application of the Scripture Test.

The Old Testament.—Our Lord's appeal to it; the Law; the Psalms; the Prophets.

The New Testament.—Its teaching of the doctrine in relation (1) To the sufferings of Christ; (2) To the law and government of God; (3) Christ's resurrection and ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; (4) The forgiveness of sin; (5) Christian life; (6) Effect throughout the universe.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

Historically and Scripturally Examined.



THE New Testament contains the biography of Jesus Christ, His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension ; and

The New Testament mainly historical

Christianity is bound up with the maintenance of these facts. It cannot, with any consistency, be treated as a mere theory of moral religion. His true appearance, His real sacrifice, are central facts of Christian belief. His birth in Bethlehem, His death on Calvary, come before us with vivid distinctness on the pages of the New Testament. No incidents are so fully described as the first and last, in the matchless story of Jesus of Nazareth. Accordingly, the two master facts of Christianity are emphasized in the earliest creed, "Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate."

But with this history, doctrine is indissolubly intertwined. In other words,—for *doctrine* is often

Doctrine intertwined with the history.

Principles embodied in the Incarnation and Crucifixion.

confounded with a vulgar idea of *dogma*—there lies a *meaning* in the heart of these two facts—a principle is embodied in each of the marvels. The Nativity is the *Incarnation* of the Son of God. The Crucifixion is the *Atonement* He made for sin, a sacrificial death, crowning a course of perfect obedience and unparalleled self-denial.

The Atonement the polestar of thinkers in Christendom for eighteen centuries.

The doctrine itself we propose to treat in its historical aspect, that is to say, we intend looking at the hold it has had firmly and steadily on human minds for eighteen centuries, and the succession of thoughts which it has originated during that period. The atonement is a polestar on which the gaze of thinkers in Christendom has been fixed with an irresistible attraction; and their observations form a main part of religious experience and theological science from age to age during the Christian era. Such a history of thought must be worth our study. We shall indicate, when we have completed it, certain impressions which it leaves upon a student's mind, preparing for an inquiry into the true meaning of the doctrine which has called forth all this mental activity. Thus we shall test the deliverances of theology on the subject, by applying to them what appear to us as the authoritative teachings of the New Testament.

I.

HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT.

PATRISTIC thoughts on the subject appear in the earliest instances under a simply *religious*, rather than a *scientific* form. They are utterances of pious hearts, rather than of inquiring minds. When we turn from the manly, vigorous thoughtfulness of the inspired writers,—the argumentative power of St. Paul, the intense reflectiveness of St. John, the two great theologians of the New Testament, we are struck as we enter the domain of the Apostolical Fathers with the intellectual inferiority of the latter. We discover not only a sort of infantile simplicity, which is very beautiful, but also a sort of infantile weakness, a failure in catching the grand ideas of the masters at whose feet they sat. We make a descent, as we pass from the elder to the younger. We cannot find in the Apostolical Fathers that they grasped anything like the full idea which had been presented to them by the lips and pens of the men whom they no longer saw and heard.

Patristic thought on the subject religious rather than scientific.

The intellectual inferiority of the Apostolical Fathers.

Perhaps in early Patristic literature the passage most remarkable in its evangelical ring is that which occurs in an Epistle inscribed to Diognetus by an unknown writer:

The Epistle to Diognetus on the Atonement.

“The love of God gave His only Son as a ransom for us; the holy for the unholy, the sinless for the wicked, the pure for the

vile, the immortal for the dying. For what else covers our sins than His righteousness? Whereby could the unholy be justified but by the Son of God? Oh sweet substitution! Oh what an unsearchable device, what an unexpected blessing! The unrighteousness of the many to be hid by the righteousness of the One, the righteousness of the One to justify many. *In Him* has God shown to us a Saviour who is able to save what without Him it was not possible to save. *In Him* has God first loved us; how canst thou sufficiently love Him in return?"

Scientific theology dates from the Nicene era, when Athanasius contended for the doctrine of the Trinity.

Athanasius on the Atonement.

The doctrine of Augustine on the subject.

Scientific theology may be dated from the Nicene era, when Athanasius contended for the doctrine of the Trinity, and the uncreated nature of the Divine Word. This subject shone as a sun in the midst of the firmament, and other truths paled before it; but valiant champions for the true and proper Divinity of our Lord turned attention to two questions respecting the death of Jesus, asking, was it *necessary* to salvation, and how did it *operate* in securing human salvation? Athanasius maintained that since God is just, His justice must be satisfied in accomplishing human salvation; that it would be out of place, to annul the law, and also unseemly to leave the rational world in perdition, therefore compassion and righteousness moved God to give His Son for the redemption of His creatures.¹

Augustine, with less precision, but more subtlety, believed that no other way of salvation was suitable, that it was not *naturally* necessary God should do as He did, but it was *morally* necessary that He

¹ *De Incarnatione*, c. vii. 11-14.

should do what was best. Hilary followed much in the same track, teaching that the necessity of an Atonement must be sought not in the nature of the Redeemer, but in the wants of the redeemed; in this respect moving away from the line marked out by his Greek predecessor. But Hilary's statement occurs in his *de Trinitate* (xiii.), indicating that the theology of the Cross grew out of the theology of the Incarnation, and, in both directions, the limits of human thought were undiscerned, and it was not seen that the clear light of Revelation is encircled by a cloud of mystery; and that in striving to be wise above what is written, men entangle themselves in a network of words without wisdom. Thus far, speculations existed as to the necessity of the Atonement: we advert now to theories touching the mode of its operation.

Hilary on the necessity of the Atonement.

The victory of Christ over Satan is a fact full of unspeakable relief to souls vexed with the evil one's temptations. Such inspiring words as, that He has taken out of the way the handwriting which was against us, "nailing it to His cross, and having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it,"¹—sound like trumpet calls from heaven, cheering us in this world's great battlefield. Well might early Christians connect St. Paul's words with the doctrine of Atonement. Calvary they

Theories as to the operation of the Atonement

¹ Col. ii. 14.

saw was the spot, where the Captain of salvation won the day; and as they pondered the mighty marvel, they thought of the devil's defeat as a main step in Christ's conquering path. The idea of some seems to have been, that the enemy took the Saviour to be, as man was, a mere creature, and that by crucifixion the purpose of His coming would be defeated; to his dismay, he found that through the very cross, He accomplished His design.

The view of
Gregory of
Nyssa.

Some notion of this kind glimmers confusedly in the writings of Irenæus and Origen. At a later period, Gregory of Nyssa argued that men by sin came under the devil's dominion, and that Jesus offered Himself as a ransom; that the crafty spirit assented to the plan, and then found himself unable to retain his captive. Ambrose, and Gregory the Great, chose the same line; but Gregory Nazianzen scouted the idea, and says,

Ambrose
and Gregory
the Great.

Gregory
Nazianzen.

“It is a shame to think the robber should be paid for his robbery.”¹

Anselm's
doctrine
that the
ransom was
paid to
God.

Anselm opens a new chapter in the history, and he connects the Atonement with the Incarnation in his famous book entitled *Cur Deus Homo*. He could not admit the idea of a ransom being paid to Satan. It was paid to God. Sin denied the Divine due, robbed the Divine Sovereign. This was intolerable; consequently, man could not be

saved unless Divine claims were satisfied. Those claims could be met, in connection with human redemption, only by another—by the Incarnate Son of God. This great metaphysical divine accepted with all simplicity the fact of an Atonement, showing its indispensable necessity and working out his elaborate argument with care. The satisfier of long violated claims, he said, must be perfect God and perfect man; of Adam's posterity through a virgin birth; in Himself innocent of sin and free from death; having life in His own hands, offering it as a satisfaction for human iniquities.¹

The necessity of satisfaction to Divine claims.

The qualifications of the satisfier.

Abelard contended that God's mercy is free to forgive on man's repentance. There is no need of any satisfaction; the death of Jesus is meant to produce repentance. This philosopher failed to see difficulties in the way of man's salvation, which, under one form or another, had struck preceding divines, who wisely looked below the surface.

Abelard repudiates the need of satisfaction.

Aquinas follows Anselm, combining the idea of satisfaction to justice with the redemption of man, and pointing out that deliverance from Satan is a consequence of *this* satisfaction, inasmuch as the righteous Governor can now consistently save the captive from the thralldom he had incurred. Aquinas strives to untwist the old net which had entangled so many fingers; and he makes some

Aquinas.

¹ *Lib. II. 6, 14.*

The distinction between the sufficiency and the efficiency of the Atonement.

important contributions to the theology of the Atonement. According to this schoolman, its *sufficiency* and its *efficiency* are to be distinguished; for its intrinsic merit is infinite, but its actual application is limited. Also he said, that whilst Christ secured by His satisfaction the forgiveness of sin, He by His Divine merit earned for believers eternal life. Further, that the Lord's obedience is both active and passive; and that the secret of salvation is a mystical union between the Saviour and the saved.¹

Christ's obedience active and passive.

Duns Scotus denied the doctrine of Anselm.

Duns Scotus, another schoolman, denied the doctrine of Anselm. He could not admit that the Atonement is the only possible method of redemption. God might have accepted some other substitute, or dispensed with one altogether. The fundamental principle of Duns Scotus is this:

"An offering to God is worth *what He accepts it for, and no more.*"²

The principle is a legal one, derived from the pandects of Justinian, and bears the name of *acceptilatio*, i.e., an acquittance based upon a creditor's favourable agreement with a person in debt to him. It may startle modern readers to find expounders of the doctrine of Redemption resorting to a code of Roman law for something like a parallel to the gracious provision of the Gospel.

¹ *Summa Tertia pars Quest. xxii., xlii.-xlix.*

² *Dist. xx., Lib. iii., In Sent. Lombardi. Quæst. 1.*

It may be said of some disputants in that and in later ages, that they, like Israelites, "went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share and his coulter." ¹

Many of the controversies at the Reformation involved conclusions touching the Redemptive work of our Lord, but it was chiefly in an inferential way. The main stress of argument on both sides related to the method by which the blessings of that gracious provision are to be secured, whether by simple faith or through the operation of sacraments.

The controversies at the Reformation referred to the way of securing the blessings of the Atonement.

Calvin, in his *Institutes*, enters somewhat at large upon this important theme. He insisted, after Anselm, upon the necessity of the Saviour's work, and distinctly expresses it as an act of self-sacrifice. We could not escape, he said, the judgment of God, if Christ had not suffered Himself to be condemned before a mortal man, a wicked heathen. Christ then Himself took the sinner's place, appeared as his Substitute, and endured death on account of our sin. He represented the transgressor, and the burden wherewith we are oppressed was laid upon Him. Calvin goes on to say, He performed a perfect expiation, gave his soul an oblation for sin, so that the filth of our transgressions might be purged away:—

Calvin, in his *Institutes* insisted on the necessity of the Saviour's work.

¹ 1 Sam. xiii. 20.

“He offered Himself unto the Father as a sacrifice, that the satisfaction for our sins being accomplished, we might cease to dread the wrath of God.”¹

Grotius taught the fitness and convenience of punishment correspondent to guilt.

Grotius, the great Jurist of the period, and a Theologian as well, transferred to the latter ideas familiar to him in the former capacity. He considered that punishment, corresponding with guilt, was not absolutely necessary to righteous government, but it might be fit and convenient. Laws may be relaxed, penalties remitted; but though this is possible, it is not always proper.

Grotius repudiates the notion broached by Duns Scotus, though he approaches near it when he says the sufferings of the Redeemer are an “*aliud pro quo.*” Here the learned Jurist comes out unmistakably; not much, however, to the satisfaction of the believer who is devoutly seeking after truth.

A *via media* adopted by some Continental divines.

It is sufficient to say of certain Continental divines, that whilst some rejected and others accepted the Anselmic view, the rest declared in so many words that they adopted a *via media*; but, turning to England, we meet with very pronounced views with regard to the satisfaction of Christ. Thorn-dike, for instance, an eminent Anglo-Catholic, accepts that idea, and speaks of His sacrifice as propitiatory and expiatory; but he will not admit that our sins could be imputed to Him, or His merit to us. Pearson and Barrow use expressions

Anglo-Catholic views.

Thorn-dike, Barrow and Pearson.

¹ Inst. Lib. II., c. xvi., s. 5, 6.

indicating belief in the absolute necessity of an Atonement.

Amongst the Puritans Goodwin proceeds on the principle that Christ's death was a ransom for the elect. He presses to an extreme the idea of suretyship and debt-paying; and refers to the sinner's liability, as absolved by Christ's sufferings; the sinner's bond, as cancelled by His resurrection. Owen insists that Christ's death was a punishment for sin, properly so-called, and he supplies a dissertation on justice, from which he concludes that the non-punishment of sin would cloud the Divine glory. Baxter did not hold the doctrine of imputation. He would not admit that we were in Christ, so as to fulfil the commands of law through His obedience, or so as to endure the penalty of guilt by His death; but he believed in the Atonement as essential to our salvation, and as fully sufficient for its gracious purpose.¹

Puritans.

Goodwin regards Christ's death as a ransom for the elect.

Owen as a punishment for sin properly so-called.

The Latitudinarian divines of the seventeenth century pursued the same course with regard to the Atonement, as they did with regard to other doctrines. They declined to enter into what they deemed scholastic subtleties, and only in general terms referred to the priesthood and sacrifice of the Saviour; recognizing, however, an Atonement as essential in the revealed way of salvation.

The Latitudinarians recognise that Atonement is essential in the revealed way of salvation.

¹ Goodwin's Works, iii. 15; iv. 64; Owen's Works, ix. 198; and Baxter's *Aphorisms of Justification*.

In later times it has been thought that public justice has been met by the death of the Redeemer.

In later times, under an impression of the momentous bearing on the government of the universe, which marks the atonement of our Saviour,—it has been thought that reflections on that point afford the best clue to an illustration of the subject. It is not the justice of God as an attribute in itself, but rather what is understood by *public* justice—justice in the administration of government and the maintenance of order—that has, as it is believed, been met by the death of our Redeemer.

The application of the Realistic philosophy to the theological theme.

Very different from this is the application of Realistic philosophy to the theological theme. It is well known that amongst schoolmen there was one class who conceived that, in the order of existence, the general precedes the particular, that in the mind of God there was a typical idea, to which all individuals of the order belonging to it are conformed. According to this notion, the Son of God is regarded as the ideal man, the eternal root and type of all mankind. He puts on the fleshly accidents, which belonged to humanity, as He had before stood to men in the closest spiritual relation. Christ was the actual Mediator between God and man. His resurrection declared that God confessed Him in that character, and thereby confessed men to be righteous in Him. It is therefore said, all men were in Christ, Christ is in all men.¹

These views relate to the object of Atonement.

These philosophical views relate to the *object* of

¹ Maurice, *Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 221. *Theological Essays*, 199-203.

the Atonement; other views may be noticed in reference to the *cause* of the sufferings and death of Christ. They resulted, it has been thought, simply from the inevitable conflict between good and evil, when the perfect Man lived in a world of sinners. Had Jesus Christ been simply surprised by the wiles of His adversaries, and dragged struggling and reluctant to His doom, He would have been a victim, not a sacrifice. It was His *foresight* of all the results of opposition to the world's sin, and steady and uncompromising battle against it which elevated His death to the dignity of a sacrifice.¹

Views relating to the cause of the Atonement.

Some authors, looking for what may be deemed the *essence* of our Lord's sufferings, have found it in an identification of Himself with a world of sinners. The idea of His union with us, and our union with Him, is thus carried out:—

Views relating to the essence of our Lord's Atonement.

“Our Saviour, conscious of our sins, has taken them upon Himself and atoned for them; we, conscious of His righteousness, appear with it in the sight of God, and are justified. Our sins are His sins. His righteousness our righteousness.”²

Everything like satisfaction to Divine law, the expiation of sin, the Divine appointment of a sacrifice, drops entirely out of some of these theories,—the effect appears simply and entirely moral—an influence on the heart and life of man.

¹ Robertson's *Sermons*, i. 158; Young's *Life and Light of Men*, 286. ² *Philosophy of Evangelicalism*, 140.

The moral
theory of
the
Atonement.

The most peculiar of all modern attempts at explaining the doctrine of Atonement is the following:

“The agony gives in itself the keynote of our Lord’s ministry, because it is pure moral suffering; the suffering, that is, of a burdened love, and of a holy and pure sensibility, on which the hell of the world’s curse and retributive madness is just about to burst. The moral tragedy of the Garden is supplemented by the physical tragedy of the Cross.”

The essence of the conception is the “moral power view of the Atonement;” but, strange to say, after this it is allowed that such a view is insufficient as to its effect on human minds, it needs something to be added. The facts of Christ’s suffering must be put into what are called “altar forms,” *i.e.*, sacrificial terms.

The use of
sacrificial
terms.

“Without these forms of the altar, we should be utterly at a loss in making any use of the Scripture facts, that would set us in a condition of practical reconciliation with God.” “*He is my sacrifice*—opens all to me, and beholding Him with all my sin upon Him I count Him my offering. I come unto God by Him, and enter into the Holiest by His blood. We want to use these altar terms just as freely as they are used by those who accept the formula of expiation or judicial satisfaction for sin.”¹

We have thus in the briefest way indicated the principal theories of the Atonement, as they are called, published in ancient and modern times. The value or otherwise of these conclusions can be determined by the reader when he comes to the third part of this Tract.

¹ Bushnell, *Vicarious Sacrifice*, 460-463.

II.

RESULTS OF THIS REVIEW.

1. IT is impossible to reflect upon what we have stated without being impressed with the belief that early and continuously the fact of an Atonement has been admitted by the Christian Church, and vast importance from the beginning has been attached to it. A perception that the death of Christ lies at the heart of the Gospel, is characteristic of Christian believers in every age. They have bent their thoughts upon it with increasing concentration, and have earnestly searched after the meaning of the wonder. Even some who have hesitated to embrace other distinctive truths of the Gospel, have shrunk from the rejection of this prominent one. An eminent Arian of the last century expressly allowed that

The constant admission and the vast importance of the fact of an Atonement.

An Arian's admission.

“Christ's shedding His blood, and offering up His life was the means of remission and favour to penitent sinners.”¹

2. There is room for censure in some of the theories reviewed. The relation of the Atonement to Satan was treated after a fashion as absurd as it is unscriptural. Open to a different form of censure is another view, which makes it appear as if, when the Almighty had determined to punish sinners,

Censurable theories.

¹ Price, *Sermons*, IV., v., and *Appendix*.

“A third party is moved to pity, and in His anxiety for their deliverance, interposes His utmost endeavour to accomplish that end. He offers to purchase their release from suffering by His own, to buy their deliverance by Himself becoming a victim. For this price of innocent blood that mighty Being consents to change His purpose, and to suffer the objects of His wrath to be released.”¹

Supposed
strife
between
justice and
mercy.

Akin to this is an imaginative picture of a strife between justice and mercy.

Certain theories are antagonistic, and mutually destructive; others are capable of harmonious combination. They can be placed in relations, so as to strengthen each other. *But not one is complete of itself.*

Various
aspects of
Atonement.

The Atonement presents numerous aspects in relation to God, law, government, sin, man, and the universe. It suggests the similitude, though it be very imperfect, of a many-sided mountain seen at a distance, and then examined by close survey. A remote glance only apprehends a single majestic unity. The mountain lifts its glorious head high into the heavens, and impresses the beholder with a sense of beauty and sublimity beyond expression. But when closely approached it opens up many a secret; and as it is looked at by clear-sighted and sympathetic eyes, it is found to be at the same time one, yet manifold. So, in our meditations on the Atonement, as we pass from point to point, we discover variety in unity, a collection of wonders,

¹ This representation is condemned by Gilbert in his *Lectures on the Christian Atonement*, 227

but a perfect whole. The subject is felt to be inexhaustible. True developments are reached; but no one has scaled the top, so as to look down all round, and see the mutual bearings of the encircling sides. It calls forth unceasing praise; and this theme for admiration and thankfulness on the part of the redeemed reminds us of the song of Moses and the Lamb,—very old, yet ever new.

The subject
inexhaustible.

Present day
interest in
the subject.

3. Much in the subject now-a-days awakens curiosity such as never crossed the minds of elder theologians; and it must be admitted that some questions on the subject have passed out of what, strictly speaking, is *the religious* sphere of thought. Much of what we read is mainly speculative, but it displays acute thinking and logical dexterity, with some measure of intuitive perception. More, of a second-hand order, requires criticism of a less favourable kind. Scientific theology is, with some persons, an intellectual necessity,—they cannot put up with what satisfies minds of another class. Still, it must be remembered, a clear line of demarcation ought to be drawn between the plain teaching of the Word of God, and theories of explanation, which are woven by its students. When they are purely philosophical, brought in for the purpose of removing difficulties, they should be appreciated accordingly. But if extraneous helps, they ought never to be confounded with the authoritative deliverances of Holy Writ; and if

The
teaching of
the Word of
God to
be dis-
tinguished
from ex-
planatory
theories.

they be really based on Scripture, with more or less of probability, the structures thus raised remain clearly *distinguishable*, though not always *distin-
guished* from the corner-stones of Divine truth. At best the conclusions so reached are only inferences drawn,—often at a second, third, or fourth remove from the sacred oracles;—and it may be the very starting-point is a misapprehension of their true meaning. It may be admissible to speak of what rests on the Divine nature, and what upon the Divine will, of what is absolutely necessary, and what is only appointed, of an imparted rather than an intrinsic value, of what is done to satisfy demands arising out of God's nature, and what is done to protect the interests of the universe, or it may be right to make distinctions such as that between the active and passive obedience of Christ; but it should be remembered that these are not distinctions found *in* Scripture—they are only conclusions, logically or otherwise drawn from it; and therefore, when they commend themselves to our judgments, they are not to be identified with the 'oracle itself.

Inferential
conclusions.

Not to be
identified
with the
oracles
itself.

Hence it follows that **those** who cannot see their way clear to conclusions reached by some divines, and are satisfied with an adherence, as close as possible, to Bible phraseology, cannot always with any justice be set down as **denying** the blessed **Atonement** of our Divine Redeemer. But certainly

it is of the greatest importance that students of Scripture should attach as definite a meaning as possible to words used in the sacred Volume.

4. We are all apt to be influenced too much by human authority, whether ecclesiastical or individual, in our dogmatic beliefs; pious, learned, gifted names often carry with them an undue weight; and, moreover, we are liable to be led on, step by step, through paths of intricate argument, to be landed at last in untenable positions. Everybody knows the fascination of eloquence; and while all admit this generally to the full, many are swept away by a torrent of it in particular instances. Theories, both old and new, lay hold of our minds with strong grasp, and hold us fast, till we come to test them by the Word of God; then we find them false or insufficient. Some theories once identified with Christian orthodoxy, and supposed to be immediately taken from the Old and New Testaments, are found to be indebted for their currency to distinguished names, or traditional opinions. Many people suppose that improvement in the knowledge of truth means nothing but progress—finding out something new—whereas true improvement often consists in unlearning what we have tenaciously held, but which has been a real obstacle in the way of legitimate progress. On the other hand, there are theories which by their ‘freshness’ have, for some, an irresistible attraction.

Influence of
human
authority

The power
of theories
old and
new.

True im-
provement.

The
mysterious-
ness of the
subject.

5. The mysteriousness of the subject is universally admitted, yet in constructing theories how often it is forgotten! A broad generalization as to the existence of mystery is laid down; then, in branching out, and supporting some particular scheme of thought, an author will proceed in such a way as to indicate, that he assumes the whole, or nearly the whole, of the redemptive provision to be perfectly explicable. But the fact remains, that as with the Trinity, so with the Atonement, it is a mystery *beyond the point where the wisdom of God has stopped* in the revelation of it; and this needs not only to be allowed as a matter of custom, but it ought also to be strenuously insisted upon, and not for a moment forgotten by those who think and write respecting it. There are limits to human thought. It must be so, because the finite mind cannot enter into all the thoughts and purposes of an infinite mind. Such a statement, it may be said, is trite enough, but it is as true as it is trite. There is no room for the shadow of a doubt as to the fact of an Atonement, it is clear as the sun at noonday; but the full and exact mode of its operation, so far as it is unrevealed in Scripture, is quite another thing, and light enough streams from the cross to lead us to its foot, and to find salvation there; round about, however, is a cloud of "venerable darkness," and, for one, the writer of this Tract fears to enter into that cloud.

Limits
to human
thought on
the subject

There is nothing strictly analogous to the Atonement of Christ in any of the processes of nature, or in any of the incidents of history. The story of the Locrian lawgiver, who put out one of his own eyes to save the eyesight of his son, and so meet the law which enacted blindness as the penalty of transgression, has sometimes been appealed to as illustrating the vicarious suffering of the Saviour; but light into the mystery derived thence is extremely feeble at the best. Even Jewish types, precious as they are, and divinely intended to foreshadow and be a framework of thought in our conceptions of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, leave much which we cannot fathom.

Nothing in nature analogous to Atonement.

Philosophical speculations, meant to clear up difficulties, fail to accomplish their purpose. If dogmatism forces reason into agreement with revelation, rationalism as often forces revelation into agreement with reason.¹ Force is employed on both sides. Of course, if we could know the whole on both sides, then agreement would be found perfect; but the limit to our reason, and the limit to God's revelation, are facts we cannot overcome. God has not seen fit to reveal everything. In the Gospel, as elsewhere,

Insufficiency of philosophical speculations to clear up difficulties.

“He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it.”²

¹ See Mansel's *Limits of Religious Thoughts*, Lect. 1.

² Job xxvi. 9

Impossible
to silence
all objectors.

The Bible never professes to explain everything. As to silencing all objectors, it is impossible. Change your attitude as you will, objections will still be made. It has been well remarked :—

“Let us suppose then, that instead of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, the Scriptures had told us of an absolute and unconditional pardon of sin, following upon the mere repentance of the sinner. It is easy to imagine how ready our reasoning theologians would be with their philosophical criticisms, speculative or moral. Does it not, they might say, represent man as influencing God ;—the Finite as controlling, by the act of repentance, the unchangeable self-determinations of the Infinite ?” “If it is unworthy of God to represent Him as angry and needing to be propitiated, how can philosophy tolerate the conception that He is placable, and to be softened by repentance ?” “A strictly moral theory requires, therefore, not free forgiveness, but an exactly graduated proportion between guilt and suffering, virtue and happiness.”¹

III.

APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURE TEST.

The
testimony of
a plain
English-
man.

“THAT Christ suffered and died as an atonement for the sins of mankind is a doctrine so constantly and so strongly enforced through every part of the New Testament, that whoever will seriously peruse those writings, and deny that it is there, may, with as much reason and truth, after reading the works of Thucydides and Livy, assert that in them no mention is made of any facts relative to the histories of Greece and Rome.”²

These are the words of a plain Englishman, a scholar and a man of ability, and they express the opinion of many thousands of his fellow-countrymen. How, as it appears to us, the fact of our

¹ Mansell's *Limits of Religious Thought*, 213.

² Soame Jenyns, *Internal Evidence*, p. 29.

Lord's Atonement—of His having died for our sins, redeeming us from destruction, and bringing in everlasting righteousness—is presented and illustrated in the Word of God; how far an explanation of it is there given, it will now be our humble and earnest endeavour to set forth in the clearest way that we are able.

We have used the word "Atonement" all the way through in these pages—because it is commonly employed to denote the subject in hand—with a full remembrance that the word is not an English New Testament word, since the original term so translated in Romans v. 11 (in the A.V.) means *reconciliation*. Yet our English word points to the result of the Lord's sacrifice, and is really equivalent to the idea of reconciliation. "We have received the reconciliation;" and the further question—how does the reconciliation come?—Scripture answers in a way we shall now endeavour to show. It is idle to dwell upon the derivation of the current theological expression respecting the death of Christ, as though an etymological discussion, after the manner of Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, would settle the important question which now comes under our consideration.

The use and significance of the word "Atonement."

We shall, before we take up the inspired volume as a whole, refer separately to

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The
Saviour's
testimony
to His
disciples,

When the Saviour took His memorable walk to Emmaus with the two disciples, on the evening of the resurrection, He said to them :—

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”¹

The same evening at Jerusalem, He said,

“These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”²

The
witness of
the Old
Testament
to the
significance
of Christ's
suffering.

In these passages we find a key for opening the Old Testament revelation with reference to the Redeemer. Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets are distinctly mentioned as bearing witness to the significance of His suffering. A large portion of the Law which God entrusted to His servant, consisted in specific requirements of sacrificial offerings. Sacrifices of different kinds and for various purposes were Divinely commanded; and they were adapted to awaken in the tribes of Israel, devout thoughts and affections of a manifold kind; but amongst them the most remarkable were those which related to sin. Over and over again, they are denoted by a word rendered in our version

¹ Luke xxiv. 26, 27.

² Luke xxiv. 44-47.

Atonement, the original signifying a substitution, a ransom price, an expiation. The eminent scholar, John David Michaelis, certainly not a prejudiced authority on the subject, in his paraphrase and annotation on the Epistles to the Galatians and the Ephesians (Gal. iii. 19), remarks:—

Their expiatory character denoted by the word used with reference to them.

“It was the design of the law of Moses to remind the Israelites that they were guilty of sin and liable to death. Sin was confessed over the head of the victim, and then it was slain. As it is certain that sin could not be taken away by the blood of bullocks or goats, this solemnity was no other than a memorial to the sinner, that his sin deserved death.”

At the same time, it is equally plain, that God meant by this provision to indicate that though sin deserved death, by means of sacrifice the dreadful desert could be obviated, not indeed through the shedding of animal blood, but through a real and efficacious method, of which that shedding was a vivid and impressive type. The offering on the altar, whilst it acknowledged the sin and guilt of the offerer, expressed a hope of forgiveness and acceptance. It would be most unreasonable to explain the sacrificial act as a mere utterance of despair. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in one and the same sentence, gives us assurance that sacrifices offered year by year could not make the comers thereunto perfect,—but that nevertheless they were “shadows of good things to come.” They pointed to what lay beyond themselves, and that, according to the same author, was the sacrifice of

The significance of the sacrifices under the law.

What they pointed to.

our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The whole Epistle is more or less a commentary on the Levitical ritual; how it illustrated the meaning of the historical death on Calvary, how that without shedding of blood there is no remission, and how Messiah, through His blood, has "obtained eternal redemption for us."

Priesthood
and sacrifice.

The institution of a priesthood was closely connected with the offering of sacrifice. It was precisely prescribed, and guarded against violation. The solemnities to be performed on the day of Atonement were minutely enacted, and the appearance and intercession of the High Priest in the Holy of Holies received full direction from inspired law. These observances are taken up point by point, in the Expository Epistle written to the Hebrews, after a manner suitable to them; and from successive flashes of light falling here and there on sacerdotal laws, we have revealed in typical forms, the office and the acts of the High Priest of our profession, who—rising infinitely above the sons of Aaron by "the law of an endless life"—"through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, and then "entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us."¹ It seems impossible to evade the meaning of the inspired writer; and as we regard his Epistle as an authoritative exposition of Christian faith, it is

Typical
forms
revealing
the office
and acts of
the High
Priest of
our pro-
fession.

equally impossible to deny that of this faith the belief of our Lord's Atonement and Priesthood is a vital part.

The things written in the Psalms concerning Him must not be overlooked. The interpretation of the Messianic psalms, as they are called, is beset with difficulties, but some things are quite plain. There are psalms which, in the New Testament, receive their fulfilment in the sufferings of Christ.

The
Messianic
Psalms.

"The writer himself is a type of Christ, and he is so in his character as a prophet, or preacher of righteousness. In all these Psalms a servant of God appears as a sufferer, and a sufferer for righteousness' sake; often, indeed, confessing that he suffers the just punishment of his sins *at the hands of God*, but always complaining that he is unjustly persecuted of men."¹

The prophecy in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, taken alone, suffices for our present purpose. Let it speak for itself:—

The
fifty-third
chapter of
Isaiah.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities."²

¹ Perowne on the *Psalms*, i. 54. ² Isaiah liii. 3-6, 10, 11.

The prophetic element in the latter portion of Isaiah.

The chapters in Isaiah after the 40th are held by some to be of later date than the preceding, and to be the work of a different author. If a prophetic element in the whole be allowed, the theory of division need not affect an interpretation of the text. But if it be excluded, and if the chapter under consideration be taken as mere history, then the matter is entirely altered. Ingenious attempts have been made to apply the verses to some early historical person. Now one, and now another, has been selected, and after the failure of every attempt of the kind, resort has been had to a personification of the people in general. But with no history of that period, or of any previous era, does the sum of details supplied by Isaiah fully correspond. The idea of a germinant accomplishment has also been entertained, and history and prophecy have been blended; but even this involves the admission that a predictive character pertains to Isaiah's most affecting description; and, as Mr. Cheyne says, the idea of vicarious atonement "is expressed in such vivid language *as to produce all the effect of a new revelation.*"¹

The idea of vicarious Atonement vividly expressed.

The correspondence of prophecy and fulfilment has been repeatedly pointed out, and may be seen by any one who reads the two together. Surely it cannot fail to be perceived that Isaiah's language would inevitably be regarded by Jews familiar with

¹ Quoted in *Speakers' Commentary*, v. 10.

their country's ritual, as full of sacrificial significance, pointing to some one who would be a sin offering, and make an effectual Atonement for His people. That was the interpretation put upon it by Philip, when he instructed the Eunuch returning from Jerusalem, and "began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus."¹ The substitutionary—the expiatory character of Christ's sufferings is plainly set forth in the whole passage in question.

The Evangelist Philip's interpretation of Isaiah's language.

We proceed to the consideration of the

NEW TESTAMENT

—not overlooking its connection with the Old—that we may see when the two are combined, what light they throw on the relation of the Atonement to the Lord's sufferings; to the government of God; to the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ; to the forgiveness of sin; to the Christian life, and to the universe at large.

1.—*The Lord's Sufferings.*

Every reader of the New Testament must be struck with the place in it given to the "cross and passion" of the Man of sorrows. The closing chapters of the Four Gospels are taken up with this subject, and it is dwelt upon with a remarkably impressive amount of minute detail. The verbal picture is affecting beyond all the master

The place of the cross in the closing chapters of the Gospels

¹ Acts viii. 35.

works of Christian art. And not only is this the case, not only is the reader's mind forcibly arrested and retained by the unparalleled tragedy, but, in the middle of the First Gospel, we are invited to pause, and prepare ourselves for the scenes about to follow. In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew and the twenty-first verse,—after the confession of Peter, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,”—a confession which not flesh and blood, but the Father in heaven had revealed,—after this revelation of His Divine and glorious nature, there follow these striking words:—

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

As we pass this verse, we feel ourselves on the threshold of a new and awful event, to which we have been led up, step by step, through the preceding narrative.¹ The death of Christ is seen at once in the distance, not as the end, but as the climax of a life replete with words of light and works of love. The cross looms before us as the grand appointed purpose for which He came into the world. Here, at once, Jesus of Nazareth is lifted far above the position of a mere teacher and martyr. He is not a man sent to do His greatest work by living, but by dying. His death

Christ's announcement after Peter's confession.

The death of Christ in the distance.

The cross the appointed purpose of His advent.

¹ The idea is well wrought out in Lewis' *Life of Lives*, published by the Religious Tract Society.

is the crown of His life. The only sufficient explanation of His exceptional history is found in His Atonement.

The Atonement the only sufficient explanation of His history.

What adds to the impression so received is this, that His sufferings and death were essential to the fulfilment of His mission. A martyr's death may be the crown of His life, but not the highest purpose for which He has been appointed by the Lord of life. Yet thus the consummation of Messiah's course in this world is represented in the Gospels; and thus it is spoken of in His own words:—

“The Son of Man *must* suffer many things, . . . and be killed, and after three days rise again.”¹

Death to be followed by a resurrection is the Saviour's destiny.

The necessity of His suffering.

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day.”²

The wisdom, the righteousness, the love of God required the sacrifice to be made for human salvation.

“It *became* Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”³

After this manner the inspired oracles speak of what Jesus Christ was appointed to endure, and no theory of His saving work will bear the test of Scripture which does not fully allow for this.

The New Testament view of what may be called

¹ Mark viii. 31.

² Luke xxiv. 46, R. V.

³ Hebrews ii. 10.

The elements of Christ's expiatory sufferings.

Mental.

the elements of His expiatory sufferings, corroborate what we have said. The elements appear to be fourfold: *mental, moral, spiritual, and physical.*

He had a *mental* foresight of what awaited Him in the future. In this respect His life was eminently exceptional. He knew what was before Him, as no other dweller upon earth had ever done. Crucifixion, betrayal, denial, all were foreseen. It is difficult for us, who are accustomed in our troubles to be surprised by the unexpected, to realize the experience of One, who, in the future of his history, had a distinct image of what would "happen"—if we may use the word—to Him. Chance, fortune had nought to do with Him. Coming events cast their shadows over His path in a way unparalleled. He read the prophecies concerning Himself.

"He took the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished."¹

And, connected with this conversation, as Mark tells us, there was a peculiar astonishment and awe awakened in the minds of the disciples,

"they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid."²

Did not His words convey an expression of mental agony, as when He said:

"I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"³

¹ Luke xviii. 31.

² Mark x. 32.

³ Luke xii. 50.

This mental foresight was accompanied by a *moral* feeling, which it is hard to express by any single word. We read of His compassion, but when we look into the original the corresponding word there conveys more than an idea of what we mean by "compassion." What comes nearest to it is in Mark iii. 5, where we read that He looked "round about on them in anger, being *grieved at*¹ the hardening of their heart."

He felt what may be called a moral grief, as He witnessed their unbelief, their insensibility, their sinful indisposition towards Himself. We can understand the existence of a conscious identification on the part of a noble, upright, yet pitiful nature with another out of all moral harmony with it; of a compassionate assumption of responsibilities belonging to another utterly unworthy; of a perception of guilt in another, blended with intense commiseration, as in the case of a father, who feels for his disobedient, wayward, profligate son. The son has no sense of his own guilt, but the father has an overpowering sense of the guilt which rests on him whom he regards as a second self. The anguish is unutterable to a soul which passes through such an experience; and something like it, we think, appears in the words of St. Mark. The same is suggested, ever and anon, as we turn over the pages of the Four Evangelists, and strive

¹ *σπλαγχνιζόμενος*. (We quote from the Revised Version.)

to realize what was felt by the Son of God, as He looked round on a world of sinners, whose nature He had assumed, whose sins He had come to bear. We have noticed what is called "the theory of sympathy and identification," intended to explain the nature of the Atonement. That theory is far indeed from exhibiting the doctrine of the New Testament on the subject, as we shall see hereafter: it is utterly unsatisfactory; but the inward sorrow of the Saviour really was an element in His expiatory sufferings, and it is of great importance that we notice it. It meets an objection often made, to the effect that it is impossible for one person in any way to bear the sin of another; whereas the fact is plain, that many a father, brother, friend, does bear a sin which is not at all his own, though not in the substitutionary sense in which Christ did.

Spiritual.

A veil of mystery hangs over the *spiritual* portion of our Lord's sufferings. We may connect with what we have now said, His temptation in the wilderness, His agony in the garden, and His sorrowful cry upon the cross. They are facts doubted by none who accept the authority of the Gospel narratives. Temptation presented by the father of evil must have been a source of inexpressible suffering to the Son of God. The pathetic account of what was endured at Gethsemane speaks for itself, and is inexplicable on the theory that

Jesus was a mere martyr, sealing the truth with His blood; the contrast between Him and the Christian martyr of all ages in this respect, has been pointed out a thousand times. Equally inexplicable on any theory which denies the Atonement, is the awful lament, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!"

We place the *bodily* sufferings of our Lord last, Bodily because, whilst they have been almost exclusively dwelt upon by some, especially in former days, there seems danger of forgetting or overlooking them on the part of modern speculators, who dwell upon the moral and spiritual aspects of the subject. Those aspects are of the greatest moment, but the details of the crucifixion, given by the four historians with such graphic power, must surely be intended to teach that they indicate circumstances which were indispensable parts in the mystery of redemption. The testimony of Peter is very express. Death on the cross, and what immediately preceded, are represented by him as means of salvation:—

"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

The "tree," the "stripes" are singularly significant; surely they are meant to teach that bodily pain was included in the sacrifice offered by Him, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God"

¹ 1 Peter ii. 24.

All the sufferings of Christ undergone on account of the sins of mankind.

All the sufferings of Jesus Christ are presented as having been undergone entirely on account of the sins of mankind, and for the sake of their salvation.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”¹ Again: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one which continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”²

The significance of the word *ὕπέρ*, on behalf of.

In this, and in other passages, the word *for* is very significant. It is a translation of the Greek word *ὕπέρ*, which is explained by the words *on behalf of*.³ That is the strict force of the preposition, and cannot properly be rendered otherwise; but when we study the connection of the passage in Galatians, the idea is also conveyed that what Christ suffered on our behalf He suffered *in our stead*, and thus removed from us the *curse of the law*, *i.e.*, its condemnation, sentence, and penalty. The expression “redeemed” translates the word *ἐξηγόρασεν*, *i.e.*, “ransomed,” “bought off.”³ We were captives, and Christ effected our release by laying down His life for us. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews the necessity of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is insisted upon, for we read,

¹ Rom. v. 6, 7, 8.

² Gal. iii. 10, 13.

³ See Dr. Green’s Greek Grammar, published by the Religious Tract Society.

“All things are cleansed with blood, and apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission. It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us.” “Now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”¹

2.—*The Law and Government of God.*

The revelation of Divine law and the administration of Divine government are fundamental subjects of Old Testament history. Precepts, sanctions, and an unceasing maintenance of government are all manifest. The Psalms extol them. The Prophets bear witness to them.

The Old Testament view of the divine law and government.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”²

These are the words of Christ.

“Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.”³

This is the song of heaven. The moral law is, in some degree, reflected in man’s reason and conscience. Those that have no revealed law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also

The moral law reflected in man’s reason and conscience.

¹ Hebrews ix. 22–26, R. V.

² Matt. v. 17, 18.

³ Rev. xv. 3.

bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.¹

“Their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them” (Revised Version).

Hooker on
law.

As in nature, so in Providence and in the Bible, the language of Richard Hooker is illustrated:—

“Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both angels and men and creatures, of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.”²

Isaiah.

We may use in reference to the mediation of Christ the words of Isaiah:—

“It pleased the Lord for His righteousness sake to magnify the law and make it honourable.”³

St. Paul.

St. Paul distinctly says:—

“Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness.”⁴ For “Him, who knew no sin, He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”⁵

But one passage, above all other, places the Atonement in relation to Divine righteousness:—

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”⁶

¹ Rom. ii. 15.

² *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book I., sec. 16.

³ Isaiah xlii. 21.

⁴ 1 Cor. i. 30.

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 21, R.V.

⁶ Rom. iii. 25, 26.

The passage sets before us the Atonement as a declaration of Divine righteousness. This has been explained by some theologians by the adoption of what is called a governmental theory. It is stated to be a display not of *commutative* or *distributive*, but of *public justice*, *i.e.*, it shows in what manner forgiveness may be extended so as to satisfy the claims of infinite justice, and thus to maintain in their full dignity, free from every charge of imperfection, or of mutability the character of the Governor, the rectitude of His administration, and the sanction of His law.¹ No doubt it is a fact, that the sufferings of Christ are adapted to make such an impression, and that they actually do so in the experience of believers. But the theory, whatever purpose it may serve, does not fully explain the deep nature of our Lord's propitiation, whether we translate the original word *ἱλαστήριον* as *mercy seat*, or *propitiatory sacrifice*:—the second we prefer. We are impressed with the conviction that Christ's propitiation is too profound by far for any one in the present state of existence to fathom it; that no theory which the human mind can frame, suffices to reach the depth of this infinite wonder. No argument, no reasoning, no speculation can reach what lies at the heart of the mystery.

Yet here it should be remarked, that we are most

The governmental theory of the Atonement.

Does not fully explain the deep nature of our Lord's propitiation.

¹ Wardlaw, *Socinian. Controversy*, 227.

The origin
of the
Atonement.

distinctly told, and it ought never to be forgotten that the Atonement originated with Divine love.

“God so *loved* the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son.”¹

“God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”²

Scripture does not represent Divine justice and mercy in antagonism to each other, or in alienation. They “meet together,” they “kiss each other.” They beautifully harmonize in the work of redemption: love provides a sacrifice, justice accepts it and is satisfied. Nor are we taught that the Atonement derives its efficacy *simply* from the Divine purpose, though that purpose, undoubtedly, is recognized. Rather we are given to understand that the Divine personality of the Sufferer is the secret of His efficacious offering.

The secret
of Christ's
efficacious
offering.

“Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.”³

The Lamb is associated in visions of the Apocalypse with the Father, as an object of adoration and gratitude:—

“I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

¹ John iii. 16.

² Rom. v. 8.

³ Phil. ii. 6-8, R.V.

3.—*His Resurrection and Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.*

The first two events are historically depicted in the Four Gospels: the last of them appears at the commencement of the Acts of the Apostles. They are so closely connected as to be inseparable. The resurrection involves the certainty of the ascension; the ascension the previous occurrence of the resurrection; and the descent of the Spirit is the result of the two: to each the Atonement is brought into distinct relation.

The resurrection and ascension inseparable.

The resurrection demonstrates the intrinsic sufficiency and the Divine acceptance of the sufferings of Christ as the means of human salvation. The Apostle Paul is express on this subject. Speaking upon the imputation of Abraham's faith as righteousness, he says:—

The resurrection demonstrates the sufficiency and acceptance of Christ's suffering.

“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.”¹

The Judge of all accepted the Atonement for the redemption of men, and death without resurrection would have been defeat: resurrection after death was success and victory. He “opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.” A like demonstration of the sufficiency and acceptance of

¹ Rom. iv. 22-25.

the sacrificial offering is found at the opening of the same Epistle:

“Jesus Christ, our Lord, was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His Name.”¹

The declaration of the efficiency of Christ's atoning death.

The declaration of the raised One as the Son of God with power, was also a declaration of the efficiency of what He had accomplished by His death. So again—

“We behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering.”²

We find glory and honour to be the crown of His sufferings,—declaring through all time and to every man, their efficacy. The Captain of salvation as Leader of faithful hosts, was perfected for His glorious victory through His expiatory sufferings.

Christ's ascension the continuance of His priestly office.

His ascension to heaven is, throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews, represented as a continuation of His priestly office. He had once in the end of the world put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and then, as “a great High Priest,” He “passed into the heavens.” And again it is written, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a “High Priest for ever after the order of Mel-

¹ Rom. i. 3-5.

² Heb. ii. 9, 10, R.V.

cbizedec." The Melchizedecan priesthood is afterwards dwelt upon in contrast with the Aaronic.

The contrast between the Melchizedec priesthood and the Aaronic.

"They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to remain by reason of death ; but this man, because He continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."¹

Afterwards we have the magnificent view of Him as our great High Priest presenting on our behalf His own blessed atonement:—

Our High Priest presenting His own Atonement for us.

"Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building ; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

"Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." "This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God ; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." . . "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh ; and having an High Priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."²

A parable, full of typical import, may be said to have been enacted of old, first in the Tabernacle of boards and badger skins pitched amidst the wilderness rocks, and afterwards for long years in the magnificent Temple on one of the hills of

The Tabernacle a type.

¹ Heb. vii. 23-25.

² Heb. ix. 11, 12, 24, ; x. 12-14, 19-22.

Jerusalem. There was in each an open court, with an altar for offerings, and a holy chamber, hidden from the common gaze by a mysterious veil, behind which stood the ark of the covenant, with a golden lid, surmounted by cherubim. We read that the High Priest, as he appeared in the Temple of Jerusalem, on the great day of Atonement, was arrayed in holy garments, and brought a bullock to the altar, and having slain it, kindled a censer from the burning coals, which consumed the sacrifice; and entering that chamber, the holy of holies, he sprinkled the sacrificial blood upon and before the mercy-seat.¹ No empty show was that. Which things were an allegory, full of distinct form and rich colour, in the imagination of Hebrews; and the writer of this expository epistle to them respecting their ancient ritual, shows how, in all this hallowed ceremony, there came out a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, offering His atoning sacrifice on earth, and then completing the fulfilment of His sacerdotal office in heaven.

Christ foreshadowed in the ancient ritual of Israel.

Atonement connected with Christ kingship and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Further, the Atonement is connected with the ascension kingship of our Lord, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter, after the descent of the Spirit, attributes that event to the ascension of the Crucified One. Peter had just before been speaking of the crucifixion as the act of lawless men, yet

¹ Leviticus xiv. 4.

as the fulfilment of "the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God;" and now he declares:

"This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear."¹

St. Peter's declaration on the Day of Pentecost

In thus attributing the Spirit's descent from heaven to the ascension of the Redeemer there, as the result of His resurrection from the dead, —the apostle spoke in strict conformity with our Lord's words to the disciples, previous to His last sufferings.

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you." "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you."

Our Lord's own prediction.

Thus the words of Peter and his Master distinctly teach the connection of the Spirit's work with the crucifixion and ascension of the Saviour. And we may add what the same apostle said after the Day of Pentecost:

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."²

4.—*Forgiveness of Sin.*

The Divine forgiveness of sin is a characteristic revelation in the Holy Bible, and that forgiveness is connected with the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

¹ Acts ii. 32, 33.

² Acts v. 31-32.

Forgiveness
of sin con-
nected with
the Atonement
of
Jesus Christ.

Passages on the subject of Divine forgiveness are abundant, and they are so worded as to give large and impressive views of the Divine act in this part of our salvation. The words 'forgive' and 'pardon' in our translation of the Old Testament, correspond with the original terms. They mean what we mean by forgiveness and pardon. They occur, for instance, in Solomon's prayer, at the dedication of the Temple, and in Isaiah's prophecy in the fifty-fifth chapter and the seventh verse; notice the latter particularly:

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (or, multiply pardon).

New Testa-
ment terms
and their
significance.

In the New Testament two Greek words are employed for the same purposes, *ἄφεσις* commonly; *πάρσις* once. In Hebrews x. 1-4 the word *τελείωσις* is used to denote the entire abolition of individual guilt, which could not be secured by Levitical sacrifices. *ἄφεσις* means releasing, letting go; and seems derived, as to its Scripture use, from the practice of the Jewish jubilee year, when debts were cancelled and estates were restored. A form of this verb is employed in 1 John i. 9:

"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins [to cancel or remit them], and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This appears to be an additional idea. *πάρσις* has a minor meaning, that of *passing over for a*

time, a *prætermision*, not a full *remission*, and it is applied to the Divine treatment of those who lived before the coming of Christ. The propitiation made by Him declared the righteousness of God in His long-suffering towards offences committed during long ages of the past.¹ The *τελειωσις* of pardon, not attained through Mosaic sacrifices, is secured through Christ's atonement. What is the general impression made by the study of this phraseology? We have met with interpreters who endeavour to show that deliverance from sin *itself*, *i.e.*, from its practice and power, is intended by the words rendered into English as forgiveness or pardon. But the intrinsic meaning of the terms, and the connection in which they occur, appear to us to preclude such a view. What we understand by forgiving a child, or a rebel, or a criminal, or any one who has injured us, is plain enough. We mean remission of punishment, removal of displeasure. It may produce repentance and reformation in the forgiven; but this result is not included in our conception of forgiveness, and there is no evidence that the sacred writers, in their phraseology on the subject, meant anything else than we do in ours.² To blend together the remission of guilt

Deliverance from sin not intended by pardon.

Forgiveness means remission of punishment, removal of displeasure.

¹ Rom. iii. 24-26.

² The use of the Greek substantive and verb in reference to human forgiveness in Matt. xviii. 21, and other similar passages, is surely conclusive.

and its possible moral consequence, only produces confusion. Language in common use distinguishes between the two, and sets apart "forgiveness" as exclusively denoting the remission of responsibility arising from blameworthiness.

Christ represented in Scripture as our Sin-bearer.

The forgiveness of sin is attributed in the Word of God to the Atonement of the Saviour. He is represented as our Sin-bearer. "The Lord hath *laid* on Him the iniquity of us all."¹ There seems here an allusion to the scapegoat which carried into the wilderness the sins of Israel, which had been solemnly confessed over it. In Hebrews ix. 28 we read, "Christ was once offered to bear (*ἀνελεγκέιν*) the sins of many,"—a further allusion, most likely, to the ancient ceremonial of the Jewish atonement-day. With reference to sin-bearing, we should keep in mind the old distinction between *reatus*, legal responsibility, and *culpa*, moral blame. To regard sin in the way of moral blame as being borne by our Lord, is as contrary to Scripture as it is to reason. That He graciously for our sake assumed the *legal responsibility* and consequently suffered in our stead is all which Scripture teaches, and is no more than reason can consistently admit.

Legal responsibility to be distinguished from moral blame.

Propitiation connected with prætermission and full remission of sins.

Propitiation is connected by St. Paul with prætermission, or passing over sins in the olden time. It is also coupled by St. John with the full remission now offered to all who believe:—

¹ Isaiah liii.

“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”¹

And a word (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) signifying deliverance through a ransom is associated with the mediation of Christ:—

The idea of deliverance through a ransom connected with the mediation of Christ.

“And on that account also He is, and is declared to be, Mediator of the New Covenant, in order that, by the intervening of death, to atone for sins, which could not be expiated under the first covenant, believers might receive the possession of eternal life.”²

Redemption is said to come “through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins;”³ and “the Lamb of God,” according to John the Baptist, “taketh away the sin of the world,”⁴ the word here being but another form of the verb employed by Matthew, where he tells us Jesus, after forgiving his sins, said to a man sick of the palsy, “Arise, take up thy bed and walk.”⁵

Finally, and as giving an *imprimatur* to all the passages we have cited, we adduce the words of our Lord Himself at His last supper:—

Our Lord's words at the last supper.

“This is My blood, the blood of the New Covenant, the blood shed on behalf of many for the remission of sins.”⁶

In short, our pardon is the result of His substitutionary sacrifice, and the believer can say:

“Blessed is he whose transgressions is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”⁷

¹ 1 John ii. 2.

² Heb. ix. 15: translation by Ernesti Smith in Dr. Pye Smith's *Discourses on the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Christ*, 206.

³ Eph. i. 7.

⁴ John i. 29.

⁵ Matt. ix. 6.

⁶ Matt. xxvi. 28: translation by Dr. Pye Smith, *Discourses on the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Christ*, 41.

⁷ Psa. xxxiii. 1, 2.

5.—*Christian Life.*

The motive
power
of the
Atonement.

The experimental and practical bearing of the Atonement is momentous beyond expression. Notice the use made of it by St. Paul in several ways. As a motive to *entire consecration* on the part of believers:—

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”¹

As a motive to *unselfishness* in particular, connected with consecration to Christ in general:—

“The love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all died : and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.”²

Intended to
move us to
self-
sacrifices.

St. Paul most certainly believed his Lord died that believers might be pardoned, but he also believed, that the Saviour’s death was intended to inspire in us a spirit of self-sacrifice. He is not afraid here to set forth that purpose by itself, to give it this commanding position. He had no apprehension of its imperilling the interests of evangelical truth. In dying for this end, we see that Christ’s own beautiful self-sacrifice is to be embodied in His followers, who are new creatures in Him.³ The prohibition in paradise was to the effect, you are not your own, you are not to be captivated by what seems pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make you wise. Con-

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 20. ² 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, R.V. ³ *Ibid* v. 17.

science whispers, self must not be master; and deeply as the world is sunk in selfishness, there is nothing that awakens in it the lingering sentiment of perfect humanity like acts of brave heroic self-denial. The New Testament teaches that Christ put away the guilt of sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and that we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are to put away the *practice* of sin, which is penetrated with selfishness, by the sacrifice of ourselves.

The practice of sin to be put away.

The Atonement is also urged as a motive to Christlike *liberality and Christlike humblemindedness*:—

The Atonement as a motive to liberality and humility.

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich.” “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, counted it not as a prize to be in an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”¹

The same inspired Apostle declares that

“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;”

and at the same time he, as a divine ambassador, urges the Corinthians who were professed subjects, to be reconciled to God on the ground of this mediatorial reconciliation:—

“Him who knew no sin, He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”²

A second thought bestowed on this Apostolic ex-

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 5-8, R.V. ² 2 Cor. v. 19, 21, R.V.

The recon-
ciliation of
the human
to the Divine
will.

hortation makes us feel that there is a moral reconciliation on our part—a reconciliation of the human will to the Divine will—which comes before us here, and is the very essence of Christian life and holiness; for so constraining us, the Atonement presents the strongest motive power.

Christ's
Priesthood
and our
sanctifica-
tion.

Such are uses made of the Atonement by St. Paul. In like manner it is employed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Christ's priesthood is closely connected with our sanctification, and with the new covenant law, written on the heart;¹ and purification, as well as pardon, is seen resulting from the Saviour's sacrifice.

Justification
and obedi-
ence alike
rooted in
the cross.

Pardon and holiness are neither confounded nor separated in the New Testament. They are distinguished, but only as two sides of one salvation. Our justification and our obedience have the same root,—the cross of Christ. It is remarkable how, in the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle having carefully distinguished between the subjects of justification by faith and of sanctification by the Spirit, when he reaches the eighth chapter he takes a comprehensive sweep of thought, making one blessing, as it were, overlap another, and binding the two into a marvellous unity:—

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the

¹ Heb. viii. 8-12.

Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”¹

The teaching of the New Testament on the subject practical.

It is very remarkable how practically the doctrine of our Lord's death is set forth in the New Testament. The Apostles enforce it as a grand motive to obedience. It shines, not as a light made *only* or chiefly to look at, but as a light to walk by. In some other books it is exhibited as a brilliant star, to be gazed upon and wondered at, a marvel and a mystery. It is that, no doubt, but it is far more. It is

“A lamp to our feet, a lamp to our path.” “He bare our sins, that we, having died unto sin, might live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.”²

The pardon of sin—the mercy of God in blotting out our transgressions—is included in the healing which come from His stripes, but here emphatically the moral effect of the Saviour's work is insisted upon. The end of His death on the tree is that we may die to sin and live unto righteousness. **If**

The end of Christ's death on the tree.

¹ Rom. viii. 1-9.

² 1 Peter ii. 24, R.V.

We are to show our love to Christ by following Him.

The moral influence flows from the Atonement through the work of the Holy Spirit.

we believe that Christ gave Himself up for us all, that He made a propitiation for our sins, that He reconciled us unto God, then how can we resist the conclusion that we are to love Him for all this, and show the sincerity of our love by imitating His example, following His steps? And not only do we see our duty in the light of the cross: we catch from it the motive power, the effectual inspiration to all holy obedience. We can never serve God as we ought in a slavish spirit; our chains must fall off before we can "run" in the way of His commandments; peace and joy are essential to service in our Redeemer's household, and the peace and joy we want flow from His incarnation and sacrifice. Nor does this moral influence of incalculable worth flow merely from the *doctrine of the Atonement*; it flows from the Atonement *itself*, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The two provisions must be taken together. Our Lord speaks of His own departure as the necessary condition of the Spirit's advent, and constant abode in His people; and He distinctly tells us, as already quoted, He—the Spirit—shall testify of Me, for He shall take of Mine and declare it unto you. This surely includes the revelation and application to the soul of both the pardoning and sanctifying results of His death. The work of the Spirit is the connecting link between Christ's Atonement and our sanctification.

Sometimes we catch in theological works the idea that while pardon and acceptance come *immediately* from our Lord's sacrifice, as it appears in Gethsemane and on Calvary; it is from the *doctrine* of it, theologically apprehended, that we derive the spiritual force which impels us onward in paths of spiritual resemblance to the Divine Self-sacrificer. No doubt the belief of the truth as it is in Jesus is a subjective spring of Christian holiness; but it is in *the Atonement itself*, wrought out by our Redeemer ages since, when He was on earth, that we find the original fountain of our love, holiness, and peace. He provided our spiritual life by His sacrificial death, and then sent down His own Spirit. It seems to us no sufficient exposition of that gracious wonder, to connect it simply with the forgiveness of sin, and then to leave the *doctrine* as the whole force which is to work out its result in Christian life. Our holiness, our spirit of humility, and our self-sacrifice, according to Scripture, are objects contemplated in the death of the Redeemer, as much as our pardon and our divine sonship; and, as we have said, the moral results are wrought out by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

The Atonement itself, not the doctrine, the original fountain of love, holiness, and peace.

The objects contemplated in the death of the Redeemer.

6.—*Effect throughout the Universe.*

In the Apocalypse of St. John a door is opened in heaven, and the multitude which no man can

The salvation of the innumerable multitude in the Apocalypse ascribed to the Atonement of Christ.

number are seen clothed in robes made white in the blood of the Lamb.¹ Their salvation is ascribed to the Atonement of Christ, and that Atonement is the theme of their devout meditations and their songs of praise. It remains in their memory. It inspires their gratitude:—

“Salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.”²

And what so strongly moves the affections of the saved, is represented as filling the minds of their companions in celestial blessedness:—

The Atonement fills the minds of the angels.

“I beheld, and heard the voices of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” Then appears a second multitude which no man can number, “saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”³

Every creature in heaven, earth, and sea is said to join in the grand chorus. The words assert no less than this, that the Atonement sends a thrill of delight and adoration through the universe. Elder spirits join with younger ransomed ones. And in the parables of our Lord a kindred fact is brought out, that as the lost are found and brought home—through the eternal redemption obtained for them—

“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God.” Yes, “over one sinner that repenteth.”⁴

¹ Rev. vii. 14.

² Rev. vii. 10.

³ Rev. v. 11, 12, R.V.

⁴ Luke xv. 10.

Moreover, a unified interest throughout the universe of God exists according to revelations in Scripture.

Unified interest throughout the universe according to Scripture.

“It is an impressive circumstance,” says Dr. Chalmers,¹ “that when Moses and Elias made a visit to our Saviour, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and appeared in glory from heaven, the topic they brought along with them, and with which they were fraught, was the decease He was going to accomplish at Jerusalem. And, however insipid the things of our salvation may be to an earthly understanding, we are made to know, that in the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow, there is matter to attract the notice of celestial spirits, for these are the very things, says the Bible, which angels desire to look into.² And however listlessly we, the dull and grovelling children of an exiled family, may feel about the perfections of the Godhead, and the display of those affections in the economy of the Gospel, it is intimated to us in the book of God’s message, that the creation has its districts and provinces; and we accordingly read of thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, and whether these terms denote the separate regions of government, or the beings, who, by a commission granted from the sanctuary of heaven, sit in delegated authority over them—even in their eyes the mystery of Christ stands arrayed in all the splendour of unsearchable riches; for we are told that this mystery was revealed for the very intent, that unto principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be made known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.³ And while we, whose prospect reaches not beyond the narrow limits of the corner we occupy, look on the dealings of God in the world, as carrying in them all the insignificance of a provincial transaction; God Himself, Whose eye reaches to places which our eye hath not seen, nor our ear heard of, neither hath it entered into the imagination of our heart to conceive, stamps a universality on the whole matter of the Christian salvation by such revelations as the following:—That

¹ Discourses on the Christian Revelation, viewed in connection with the Modern Astronomy, 145.

² 1 Peter i. 12.

³ Eph. iii. 10.

He is to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in Him ;¹ and that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.² And that by Him God reconciled all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”³

In this magnificent quotation, references are made to certain passages, in which the glory of Christ shines from end to end. And we may add, that in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, where he predicts the resurrection, he goes on to speak of the risen One, that He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.

The reign
of Christ.

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

And he winds up this prospect of assured victory with a mysterious reference to a delivering up of the kingdom to God, even the Father.⁴ That mystery we reverentially leave as we find it. And this victory over death is connected in the Epistle to the Hebrews with another victory of wider sweep, and one of inexplicable potency :—

The
delivery
of the
kingdom to
the Father.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”⁵

Eternity alone can fully open that inscrutable secret.

SUMMARY.

In the first division of this Tract, we have

¹ Eph. i. 10.

² Phil. ii. 10.

³ Col. i. 20.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4, 24, 25.

⁵ Heb. ii. 14.

sketched different theories on the subject of the Atonement—some originating in ancient times, according to fashions of thought then prevalent; others of modern stamp, harmonizing with ideas popular in a large circle at the present day.

Different theories sketched in the first part of the Tract.

The third and last division consists of an inquiry into revealed teaching relative to this great theme, which has so largely attracted the attention of theologians in successive ages. To that court of appeal, theories of every kind must be ultimately brought; and whatever helps they may have afforded in the course of inquiry, their acceptance or rejection, must depend on their conformity or their opposition to the Word of God. Some of the theories are quite inconsistent with Scripture teaching, others are utterly insufficient. A thoughtful comparison of them with the numerous passages we have cited will convince the reader that this is the case.

The teaching of revelation examined in the third and last part

Our Lord's sufferings are represented as *unparalleled*,—the only perfect man who ever lived yet, appearing pre-eminently as “the Man of Sorrows”—a fact unique which can be explained only by His bearing the burden of our sins, and thus effecting our salvation. Christ is described as a *propitiation*, shewing the righteousness as well as the love of God, in the pretermission and pardon of sin, and revealing Him as, at once the *Just* and the *Justifier*—maintaining law and yet justifying

Our Lord's sufferings unparalleled.

Christ a propitiation.

Christ our substitute.

The cross the inspiration of the spirit of self-sacrifice.

The Holy Spirit the power of it.

The interest awakened in Heaven.

Intellectual conviction and personal trust distinguished.

transgressors who believe in Jesus. He dies "for us," and "by His stripes we are healed. He pays the penalty we had incurred, and ransoms us from everlasting destruction. He takes our place; He expiates our offences; He bears the burden of our sins, and endures their penal consequences. From His cross we catch the inspiration of self-sacrifice; the *motive* to it is found in His own voluntary offering, the *power* accomplishing it springs from His Holy Spirit. Finally, the Atonement fills heaven with interest and rapture; and angels unite with redeemed men in worshipping "the Lamb which has been slain."

Intellectually to admit the doctrine of the Atonement, and to satisfy our reason respecting it, is one thing; to trust firmly for personal salvation to the all-atoning Redeemer, and to live under the power of His gracious Spirit, is quite another. *This* is to have sufficing guardianship amidst the world's temptations, unfailing help for every duty, abundant comfort under manifold sorrows, spiritual blessedness crowning earthly joys, and "a hope which maketh not ashamed," bearing a bright torch at the last hour, and throwing glorious light into "the valley of the shadow of death."

THE
RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

IN ITS
HISTORICAL, DOCTRINAL, MORAL
AND
SPIRITUAL ASPECTS

BY THE
REV. R. McCHEYNE EDGAR, M.A.

Summary of the Tract.

THE resurrection of Christ shown to be a plain historic fact, as distinguished from a fact in the sphere of faith. The validity of the evidence as stated by Dr. Westcott.

It is in perfect unison with the drama of contemporary history. Foreshadowed by previous resurrections. Foretold. Can alone account for the Pentecostal change in the disciples' attitude and spirit. Scherer's vivid description. Lessing's admission of its historic certainty.

The fact analysed in the following propositions:—

- I. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proclaims an accepted Sacrifice.
- II. The resurrection of Jesus Christ endows the Church with a living Saviour.
- III. The resurrection of Jesus Christ crowns human nature with a Divine Head for ever.
- IV. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Father secures the salvation and sanctification of sinners.
 - (1) As affording the great assurance of justification.
 - (2) Through a risen and living Saviour we are regenerated.
 - (3) As affording the great type of spiritual experience.
 - (4) As the great incentive to morality.
 - (5) As throwing an air of consecration over the believer's time.
- V. The resurrection of Jesus Christ throws welcome light upon the doctrine of the last things.

Recapitulation of results, and indication of the *historic*, *dogmatic*, *moral*, and *spiritual* value of the fact. Conclusion.

THE
RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST,

IN ITS

Historical, Doctrinal, Moral, and Spiritual Aspects.



It has been said that every man's history ends with his grave, and that what lies beyond belongs to the sphere of faith, and is ascertainable by no historical inquiry.¹ To such a rule, however, Jesus Christ at all events has proved an exception. A mass of historic evidence meets us which shows that on the third day after His death and burial He must have risen from the dead, for He appeared in bodily form to His disciples, with the nail-prints in His hands and feet, with the spear-gash also in His side. He spoke to them, ate with them, challenged them to handle Him, and convince themselves by actual contact that He was no mere phantom. but a living man with flesh and bones. These "infallible proofs" were repeated

The history of Jesus Christ extends beyond the grave.

He was no mere phantom.

¹ Weiss' *Leben Jesu*, Band II. n. 595.

Christ
appeared
many times
after His
resurrection.

many times during the forty days which intervened between the resurrection morning and His visible ascension from Olivet. At a later period He appeared to the arch-persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, on the way to Damascus, and changed him into the chief witness of His resurrection.

His appeal
was to
the sense-
perception
of many.

Now it will not do to say that these proofs of the resurrection were given in the sphere of faith as distinguished from the sphere of sense and sight.¹ They were given to the sense, not of disciples only, but of one who, till the moment of the risen Saviour's manifestation to him, had been an open enemy, but who was so convinced by the manifestation as to become ever after a friend. The question consequently is a purely historical one, for which the testimony is that of eye-witnesses with all their senses about them.² And if it be insinuated that the witnesses were not scientific experts, it is sufficient to reply that the question to be determined in the case was the fact of life and death, not the *cause* of either; and experts are only introduced in inquests when the *cause* is to be determined, the matter-of-fact as to life and death being left to the twelve plain men who view the body. The more, consequently, the evidence in favour of our Lord's resurrection is investigated,

It is the
matter-of-
fact, not
the cause,
of death
and life,
which has
to be
determined.

¹ Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* herausgegeben von Marheineke, 1832, s. 250.

² Güder's *Die Thatsächlichkeit der Auferstehung Christi*, s. 8.

the more complete and satisfactory it will appear, so that we do not wonder at a pains-taking investigator like Dr. Westcott concluding his admirable summary of the evidence for the resurrection with confident words like these :

The historic evidence in Dr. Westcott's view amply sufficient.

“ Indeed taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no single historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but the antecedent assumption that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency in the proof of it.”¹

But in the present Tract we are to *assume* the fact of our Lord's resurrection, and to proceed to show as clearly as we can its significance. In other words, we are to lay before our readers an analysis of this supreme fact, with such fulness of outline as our limits will allow. Before entering upon the analysis properly so-called, however, it will be well to devote a short space to the unison which really exists between our great fact and the course of history. It has been well said that every historic certainty has two bases upon which to rest : first, testimony ; and secondly, its “ harmony with contemporary history.”² We have already disposed of the first, so far as the plan of the present Tract is concerned ; but we may very properly make a remark or two upon the second.

Historic certainty includes testimony and harmony with contemporary history

¹ Westcott's *Gospel of the Resurrection*, Second Edition, p. 133.

² Coulin's *Le Fils de l'Homme*, pp. 164, 165.

Our contention, then, is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is in harmony with primitive Christian history as no other incident is.

The foreshadowings of Christ's resurrection were various and ample.

And first let it be observed that there were certain foreshadowings of this great event in pre-Christian history. Very early in the world's history God indicated by the translation of Enoch His intention of saving man "out and out," body as well as soul. Enoch's disappearance from among men must have made a great impression upon his contemporaries and posterity. The most careful cremation leaves a few pounds of ashes as the remains of what once was a human being; but here is Enoch taken away by God, and leaving not a trace behind him. "He was not, for God took him."¹ It was a most significant break in the continuity of death; a notable exception and escape; a positive proof that God could, when He pleased, deliver a man body and soul from the penalty of sin. The translation of Elijah at a later date taught the same lesson. But something more was needed to manifest the Divine resources in dealing with death. Could God *vanquish* death as well as baulk him of his prey? Could He give life to death's victims, as well as prevent victims from falling into his power? This would be a still mightier manifestation of His energy than even the translation of His prophets. Accord-

Enoch and Elijah were saved "out and out," body as well as soul.

¹ Genesis v. 24.

ingly we find resuscitations in the Old Testament and resuscitations in the New, before the great resurrection of our Lord Himself. There are just three of these recorded resuscitations in Old Testament times, and three in the days of Christ's flesh. Elijah raised the widow's son at Sarepta, who had just died; Elisha follows close upon his footsteps and raises the Shunammite's son at Shunem, after a considerable interval had elapsed, allowing of the mother's journey for the prophet to Carmel; and finally, a dead man who was being carried forth to burial is brought to life again through contact with Elisha's bones.

There are three resuscitations in each Testament before our Lord's resurrection

The three effected by the Saviour were, first, Jairus' daughter, who had just died; next, the widow's son at Nain, who is being carried forth for burial; and lastly, Lazarus, whose dead body has been for days lying in the tomb.¹ Now, although all these raisings were to a renewed mortal life, though the raised ones had after a while to die again, and though, as Dr. Westcott very properly remarks:—

Resuscitation to mortal life is to be distinguished from resurrection to immortality

“The belief in the resuscitations of the dead to the vicissitudes of ordinary life would indispose for the belief in a rising to a life wholly new in kind and issue;”

yet, to the student of history enjoying the per-

¹ Cf. Thomas' *Resurrections: Thoughts on Duty and Destiny*; also Archer Butler's *Sermons*, First Series, p. 110; and Dr. H. Macmillan's *Our Lord's Three Raisings from the Dead*.

spective of the past, these resuscitations are welcome foreshadowings of our Lord's glorious resurrection. It was surely right that He should have the pre-eminence in this respect, and be the first to rise to immortality.

Christ's resurrection predicted as well as foreshadowed.

But further, the resurrection of Christ was foretold by Old Testament prophets. To mention only two prophecies, what other event can be referred to by David in such words as these: "Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol: neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption;"¹ or by Isaiah in the words: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand?"² There was at all events ground for an expectancy of some such great event as our Lord's resurrection given by Old Testament prophets. But, what is still more important, Jesus Himself gives us a series of at least eleven different prophecies regarding His own resurrection. Thus He spoke immediately after "the hour" of entering publicly on His ministry had come about rebuilding in three days the destroyed temple of His body;³ again, when asked for a sign, He

Our Lord's eleven predictions about it.

¹ Psa. xvi. 10, Revised Version.

² Isa. liiii. 10.

³ John ii. 18-22, and Gess' *Christi Selbstzeugniss* s. 5.

gave as the crowning one that of the prophet Jonah, and declared that as Jonah had been buried for three days and three nights in the great fish, and came forth again to the light of life, so should the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.¹ And again He charged His disciples who had been witnesses of His transfiguration to say nothing of it until He was risen from the dead.² Is it not plain from all this that if Jesus had not risen, He would have been convicted of error in first raising and then disappointing such hopes? He would in such a case have sunk into the category of mistaken enthusiasts.

The sign of the prophet Jonah is un-mistakable.

But now let us pass from these foreshadowings and predictions to the actual state of things at Pentecost. It is admitted on all hands, and by none more readily than the critics of the school of Baur of Tübingen, that the apostles as they preach at Pentecost are altogether different men from what they were immediately after the crucifixion. Scherer, a critic who does not believe in the resurrection, thus states the case:—

The admission of Baur and the Tübingen School about a belief in the resurrection.

“Let one picture, if he can, the state of mind into which the little company of believers must have been thrown on the evening of the execution of their Master, on the day after the

¹ Matt. xii. 38-42.

² Matt. xvii. 1-9; cf. Thomas' *La Resurrection de Jésus Christ*, pp. 1-62.

Scherer
furnishes
a vivid
picture of
the change
in the
disciples
through the
Pentecost.

crucifixion. What a blow! What a shipwreck of illusions! They had placed all their hope in the sweet preacher of Galilee. Jesus had given Himself out as Messiah, and they had naively believed in His declarations. They were persuaded that their Master would sooner or later avow His character, and that He would be carried with acclamation to the throne. They see in Him a monarch in disguise, the heir of the magnificent promises of God. A few weeks more, a little patience, and they will assist at the marvels of the latter day. They themselves will participate in the honours. . . . But indeed! no, all that was only a dream! The critical moment has come, and Jesus has succumbed. In place of a throne, He has found a malefactor's death. He is dead. You hear it, dead, He who ought to live for ever. He has perished upon a cross like the meanest of criminals, He who ought to reign in a glory more than human. But it is a small matter that He is dead. His promises have perished with Him. Poor disciples! He had deceived you! Happy, still, if you have lost only the head of the family, the friend, the venerated Master. But you have not even the consolation to follow Him with your admiration; you are compelled to doubt Him, you are condemned to regard Him as a fool, who knows? as an impostor! Three days pass, days of trouble, of shame of which nothing will ever give an idea; three days pass, and all is changed! These very men, here still confounded and despairing, doubting Christ, God, themselves, these very men have found once more everything! They believe anew, and more than ever. They triumph. Nothing henceforth can overcome them. And this conviction which they carry within them, they know how to communicate. Listen, O world! Thou comest to hear the accent of a persuasion so indomitable, that it will be necessary indeed that thou shouldst end by yielding to it, and by submitting thyself. Such had been the morrow of the crucifixion, and such was the day after. What has happened then between these two moments?"¹

Our author thinks it sufficient to reply that the disciples have discovered an empty tomb and

“this empty tomb becomes as a track of light for the disciples.”

¹ Scherer, as quoted by Coulin in his *Le Fils de l'Homme*, pp. 170-2.

But surely it surpasses all belief that out of an empty tomb such conquering forces could come. The disciples *believed* in the resurrection of their Master, this the Tübingen critics one and all allow; but if they had not in addition drawn strength and inspiration from the risen One, they could not have faced the world as they did at Pentecost, and overcome it. After all that has been adduced by such critics as Strauss, and Volkmar, and Holsten, and Renan, the fact remains that nothing but the resurrection of our Lord is in perfect accord with the admittedly marvellous course taken by the apostolic history.

An empty tomb could not revolutionise the world.

A risen Christ the only sufficient cause.

Moreover, it has been well said that our Lord, in sending forth His disciples, as well as in His own ministry, did not so much publish new doctrine or a new morality, as proclaim Himself the centre of a new *power*.¹ And this continued after His resurrection, so that as the most recent writer on the subject has beautifully put it :—

Christ proclaims Himself as a new power

“ Christ knew how helpless and powerless His disciples would be without Him, and so He was drawn out of that still world of the departed back to them to fulfil His promise to them, ‘ I will not leave you orphans, I come to you.’ ”²

There is no intelligent appreciation of the Pentecostal preaching and of the apostolic power

¹ Gess' *Christi Person und Werk nach Christi Selbstzeugnis*, s. 23

² Beyschlag's *Leben Jesu*, Zweiter Thiel, s. 468.

which resulted in the establishment of Christianity, unless we take the apostles' own account of it, and believe that from a risen and exalted Saviour as the organ of spiritual power there proceeded such glorious influences as subdued the world. The "resurrection and the life" thus calls a living Church out of the sepulchre of a dead world.¹

And the history of the Church has been the history of a series of spiritual impulses administered by Him who is the Resurrection and the Life.

Resurrection is to be seen in the history of the Church.

"Again and again in the course of her history," it has been beautifully said, "large portions of the Christian Church have seemed to be dead and buried—buried away in some one of the lumber rooms of the past. And the world has gone its way, rejoicing as if all was over: as if henceforth unbelief and ungodliness would never be disturbed in their reign on earth by any protest from heaven. But suddenly the tomb has opened; there has been a moral movement, a profound agitation in men's consciences, a feeling that all is far from right. And then has arisen a new spirit of devotion, social stir, literary activity, conspicuous self-sacrifice; and, lo! the world awakes to an uneasy suspicion that 'John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that mighty works do show forth themselves in him!' The truth is that Christ has again burst His tomb, and is abroad among men."

It was this broad view of the apostolic history which led Lessing, although the editor of the

¹ Cf. Acts ii., especially ver. 32, 33.

² Liddon's *Easter Sermons*, vol. I., p. 99.

Wolfenbüttel Fragments,¹ those posthumous essays of Reimarus of a rationalistic character, the fifth of which deals with alleged contradictions in the narratives of our Lord's resurrection, and although reproducing many of Reimarus' objections in his own *Duplik*, to acknowledge the historic truth of Christ's Resurrection. He could not get over the fact of the marked change in the bearing of the disciples, and he admitted that the resurrection of the Lord best accounted for that change. We may well be satisfied with the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, then, as a historic certainty, when such a critic as the editor of the *Wolfenbüttel* Fragments, in spite of all the apparent contradictions in the gospel narratives of it which Reimarus and he have emphasised, is constrained by its harmony with the apostolic history to accept it.

Lessing was not himself convinced by the "*Wolfenbüttel* Fragments."

Hitherto we have confined our attention to the foreshadowings of the resurrection in Jewish history, and to its manifest harmony with the events of the apostolic age. It may be useful to take a wider view, and to point out the harmony of the great fact with history in general. For as Dr. Westcott has said:

Harmony of the resurrection with history in general.

"The preparation of Judaism was not the only preparation for Christianity. In another sense the Gentile world were making all things ready for the advent. The vast monarchies of the

¹ *Fragmente des Wolfenbüttelschen Ungenannten*, herausgegeben von Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. No. V. Ueber die Auferstehungs Geschichte.

East, the intellectual culture of Greece, the civil organisation of Rome, each fitted men in some peculiar way for the reception of the message of the Gospel."¹

Greek culture and Roman organisation had failed to satisfy humanity.

As regards Greek culture, we know that it passed from discussions on *being*, such as we have in Plato, to discussions on *knowing*, such as we have in Aristotle, and ended in scepticism. And as regards Roman organisation, the liberties of the primitive Republic issued at last in a world-embracing Imperialism. Our Lord appeared in the "fulness of time," when the world outside Judaism was wearied out with its speculations and its despotisms. A new start was needed, "the infusion of new blood," so to speak, such as a risen Saviour supplied.²

Heathendom furnishes "unconscious prophecies" of a Deliverer.

But this is not all. A study of the heathen world will show "unconscious prophecies," as they have been aptly called, almost parallel with the conscious prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures, about the advent of a Deliverer. The longing for atonement, for example, is distinctly discernible in the sacrifices which characterised the pre-Christian heathen religions.³

Again, the idea of incarnation, of God assuming a human form to help and deliver struggling men,

¹ *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, p. 87.

² Cf. Westcott, *ut supra*, pp. 88-92.

³ Cf. Scott's *Foregleams of Christianity*, an Essay on the Religious History of Antiquity; and Dr. Matheson's *Growth of the Spirit of Christianity*, vol. I., chap. i. and ii.

is to be found in more or less distinctness in almost all the heathen nations.¹

And only to mention one other of these unconscious prophecies, the desire was strong among the heathen for a deliverer who should vanquish death and hades. The descent of Orpheus, the feats of Hercules and other myths, all point unmistakably in this direction.²

The desire for a vanquisher of death and hades.

It is evident that the heathen world was longing for a deliverer of this thorough kind at the time when Christ appeared. Yet, just as in the Jewish nation the Deliverer who came to fulfil all the conscious prophecies of their sacred books was rejected and cast out, prophecy once more being fulfilled thereby, so the heathen world did not at once recognise in Jesus the Deliverer they had longed for. Even after He came, as Dr. Westcott says,

Yet the Deliverer was not recognised when He came.

“the solution which He brought to the riddles of earlier life was long misunderstood.”

But the apostles helped men to understand that in the advent of a risen Saviour they had got the new start they needed and longed for. And now as we look at “humane progress,” carried on through nearly nineteen centuries, we have evidence of the existence of just such a moral and life-giving force

“Humane progress” indicates a life-giving force behind it.

¹ Cf. Marius' *Die Persönlichkeit Jesu Christi mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Mythologien und Mysterien der alten Völker*, passim.

² Cf. Archbishop Trench's *Christ the Desire of all Nations*, especially Lect. II.

as a risen Saviour supplies. We need not confine our attention to the history of the Church, for the beneficent and elevating forces have not confined themselves to ecclesiastical organisations, but have overflowed all such channels. Let us look at the course of human progress as focussed for us by a recent writer :

Summary of
human
progress as
given by
Mr. Brace.

“There are certain practices, principles, and ideals—now the richest inheritance of the race—that have been either implanted or stimulated or supported by Christianity. They are such as these : Regard for the personality of the weakest and poorest ; respect for woman ; the absolute duty of each member of the fortunate classes to raise up the unfortunate ; humanity to the child, the prisoner, the stranger, the needy, and even the brute ; unceasing opposition to all forms of cruelty, oppression, and slavery ; the duty of personal purity, and the sacredness of marriage ; the necessity of temperance ; the obligation of a more equitable division of the profits of labour, and of greater co-operation between employers and employed ; the right of every human being to have the utmost opportunity of developing his faculties, and of all persons to enjoy equal political and social privileges ; the principle that the injury of one nation is the injury of all, and the expediency and duty of unrestricted trade and intercourse between all countries ; and finally, and principally, a profound opposition to war, a determination to limit its evils when existing, and to prevent its arising by means of international arbitration.”¹

Now what we desire to note here, is that “humane progress” has been and is towards the emancipation of man “out and out,” body and soul, in his whole personality. Looking upon it as an arc of a great circle, we see that it is on the line of that emancipation which a risen Saviour

¹ *Gesta Christi*, by C. Loring Brace, p. vi.

offers in His Gospel. To quote again from Dr. Westcott:—

“The fact of the resurrection is its starting-point, the realisation of the resurrection is its goal. The fulness of the Truth is once shown to men, as in old times the awful splendours of the Theocracy, and they are charged to work out in the slow struggles of life the ideal which they have been permitted to contemplate.”¹

We are warranted in these circumstances in affirming that our Lord's resurrection is in harmony with history in general, as well as with Jewish and Apostolic history in particular.

But then it may be said that as a historic fact the resurrection is of little practical value. Did not Lessing take away with the one hand what he had granted with the other when he maintained that “the accidental truths of history can never become the proof of the necessary truths of reason?”² Across this “foul broad ditch,” existing, as he believed, between the facts of history and the truths of reason, he declares he can never come, however frequently and earnestly he tries to make the spring. But the answer to this brightest word ever spoken by Rationalism, as Lessing's remark has been lately called, is easy. It is manifestly unfair to speak of the truths of history being one and all “accidental.” A few historic facts may have an accidental air about

Lessing's difficulty about the truths of history not proving the necessary truths of reason.

Its fallacy is in assuming the truths of history to be all accidental

¹ Cf. Westcott, *ut supra*, pp. 93-4.

² Lessing's *Theologische Streitschriften*.

Historic facts for the most part are deliberate, especially those about Jesus.

them, but the great facts of history have an air of deliberation about them which is unmistakable. And among these great and deliberate facts of history must be put the life and destiny of Jesus. Will any sane man venture to assert that some happy accident inserted into the history of a sinful race a sinless life? Is it not more reasonable to regard the life of Christ as the deliberate and most perfect expression of the godlike and the rational which has ever been given to the world? The very highest and noblest expression of the "necessary truths of reason," by which of course Lessing meant religious truth, is to be found in the life which was entirely consecrated to divinest ends. As, therefore, we hear this perfect Man declaring under the solemn apprehension of a near and unjust death, "I am the truth," we are bound to bow before Him as at once the ideal and the real, the rational and the true.¹ Truth is here incarnated; it has got hands and feet; the Word has become living; the necessary truths of reason here live, move, and have their being within the compass of one peerless life. It follows necessarily from this that the destiny of this person is of paramount importance. Truth is put upon its trial in Him; His fate involves

Truth has its destiny determined in Christ.

¹ Cf. Krüger's *Die Auferstehung Jesu in ihrer Bedeutung für den Christlichen Glauben*; Kähnis' *Die Auferstehung Christi als geschichtliche Thatsache*; and Auberlen's *Divine Revelation*, Clark's translation, p. 65.

its destiny. Consequently Lessing's "foul broad ditch," which he declared existed between the facts of history and the truths of reason, is bridged or rather annihilated in the history of Christ, and we are face to face with the fate of religious truth in His biography. In a word, the destiny of Christ turns out to be the very *cruz* of history.

Lessing's ditch bridged, or rather annihilated, in Christ.

These observations will prepare us for the analysis proper to which we would now proceed; and

I. *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ proclaims an accepted sacrifice.* Resurrection is from the dead. It implies a previous death, and is a release from it. Now the death of Jesus Christ is one of the prime mysteries of the world. It was no ordinary death. It was the death of the only sinless and adult Being who ever tabernacled with men. It was the execution of the only Being who had never done anything amiss. Our souls recoil in horror at the very possibility of persons being executed for crimes of which they have been innocent, and the law of civilized nations instructs its juries always to give accused persons the benefit of the doubt, should a doubt about their guilt exist. But even in those cases where individuals have been executed for crimes of which they were not guilty, there has been no pretention on the part of their champions that they were innocent of all sin. Here, in the case of Christ, however, is the undoubted execution

Resurrection implies death.

Slaughter of the innocent is revolting.

Christ
sinless in
heart and
to the end.

of one who was not only innocent of the particular crime charged against Him, whether at the Jewish or at the Roman trial, but was innocent of every crime. He was a righteous, holy, and innocent Being, some of His very enemies being judges. He could, towards the close of His career, challenge all His adversaries in the memorable words, "Which of you convinceth ['convicteth'—Revised Version] Me of sin?"¹ He was indeed "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."² And in token of all this, God was with the sinless One as with no other of the race. The words and works of Christ bore witness to the special inspiration and interest of God, the Father.³ And yet when we pass on to the close, we seem to see Him "forsaken of God" as He is put to death by the Romans. Can the permission of such a tragedy be reconciled with the government of a just God?

"Imperfect justice of the world" cannot embrace or explain Christ's death.

Now it will not do merely to put this death of Christ into the category of that "imperfect justice of the world" which has weighed heavily on souls before even Asaph penned the seventy-third Psalm, and has yet constituted a chief argument for a future life where justice shall be crowned and perfected. We do not wish to postpone this mystery of the death of Christ to the solutions awaiting all

¹ John viii. 46.

² Heb. vii. 26.

³ John xiv. 10, Revised Version.

mysteries in the life to come. Innocents are slaughtered as at Bethlehem; innocents may be executed through the prejudice and imperfection of public justice; but in neither of these instances are the victims consenting parties to the procedure.

But in the case of the death of the sinless Christ, if He was a consenting party to the execution, and had adequate reason for His self-sacrifice, the difficulty in the case on the ground of justice is removed. Let us suppose, then, that He was what He professed to be, a voluntary victim; let us assume that He had the right to sacrifice Himself for others, by virtue at once of the fact that He was Divine and had no sins of His own to expiate, then, if He accepted voluntarily the responsibilities of men's sins, if He allowed the Lord, His Father, to lay upon Him the iniquity of us all,¹ nay more, if, as a priest as well as victim, He dedicated Himself to death, and made the Cross of Calvary the altar of His self-sacrifice, then His death and execution might not only be permitted under a righteous government, but might be the means of magnifying the law and order which the government was pledged to secure.²

But granting all this, how could it be demonstrated that the sacrifice thus cheerfully and nobly given had been accepted by the Supreme? How could the Father show that the death of Jesus

Christ's death was a self-sacrifice on sufficient grounds, and so permissible under a just government.

The demonstration of Christ's atoning sacrifice being acceptable is given in the resurrection.

¹ Isaiah liii. 6.

² Cf. John x. 17, 18.

Resur-
rection is
the release
of a victim
from death.

Christ was a satisfactory and complete atonement? How could it be put beyond all dispute that the instinct and demand for satisfaction in view of man's sin, which our enlightened consciences are found to endorse, had been appeased? This could only be by Christ's resurrection. For resurrection is the release of a victim from death. It is the surrender of one who had been death's captive for a time. By raising Jesus Christ from the dead, therefore, the Father demonstrated to the whole human race that the sacrifice on Calvary was sufficient and accepted. Hence the Apostle Paul declares regarding Him, that "He was delivered," manifestly to death, "for our offences, and raised again for our justification."¹

Christ's
body was
not allowed
to see
corruption.

Not only so, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ took place at such a time and under such circumstances as allowed of His seeing no corruption. The Apostle Peter, in his sermon at Pentecost, expressly refers to the sixteenth Psalm as prophetic of Christ, and interprets for us the verse containing the clause, "neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Having referred to the fact that David's body certainly saw corruption, since his sepulchre was with them "unto this day," he continues, "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, **that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh.**

¹ Romans iv. 25.

He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell [*i.e.*, 'Hades'—Revised Version], neither did His flesh see corruption."¹ The evident idea, therefore, is that corruption was not allowed to begin in the precious body of the Son of God. Not only has the Father declared by raising His Son that the sacrifice is sufficient and accepted, but by raising Him at the earliest moment consistent with His plan for securing a complete historic evidence of death as well as of resurrection, at a moment before any corruption could have begun, He indicates His own readiness and delight as Father and Ruler of men in accepting the Son's sacrifice.

The Father released the Son from death at the earliest moment consistent with complete historic evidence.

No wonder, therefore, that the resurrection of our Lord is represented as kindling in human hearts "a lively [or, 'living'—Revised Version] hope."² The moment we look to the resurrection of Christ intelligently and sympathetically, we discern in it the Father's "sign-manual" that He is satisfied with our Substitute and Sacrifice, and we in consequence may go free. Our Substitute and Sacrifice *was* dead, but the Father raised Him from the dead, and so furnishes us with the strongest possible assurance that the Sacrifice has been accepted,—that He who was delivered for our offences, has been raised for our justification.

The "living hope" kindled in human hearts by the resurrection.

¹ Acts ii. 30, 31.

² 1 Peter i. 3.

II. *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ endows the Church with a living Saviour.* We pass now from the fact of Christ's resurrection betokening the acceptance by the Father of the Son's self-sacrifice, to the nature of the life bestowed upon the risen Redeemer. We have already noticed the contrast that exists between this resurrection of Christ and the previous "raisings from the dead." Those persons, we have every reason to believe, died again; death a second time asserted dominion over them; but Jesus rose to immortality. "Christ," says the Apostle Paul, "being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."¹ Hence He could say of Himself, when revealing Himself to John in Patmos, "Fear not: I am the first and the last, and the Living One: and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades."² The resurrection has thus endowed the Church with an immortal Saviour.

Raisings to a renewed mortal life; but in Christ's case it was resurrection to immortality.

Now let us consider what this implies. A dead Saviour could not sustain a suffering Church. Let us suppose that the holy women had succeeded in carrying out their purpose on the morning of the resurrection;³ let us suppose that the Roman

A dead Christ would be insufficient for a suffering Church.

¹ Rom. vi. 9, 10. ² Rev. i. 17, 18; Revised Version.

³ Cf. Faunce's *Resurrection in Nature and in Revelation*, p. 145.

guardsmen had given them access to the sepulchre, and that they had perfected the embalmment, and that thus a dead Christ had been secured for His followers in Jerusalem ; would the disciples, with such a Saviour on their hands, have been instrumental in creating the Christendom of to-day ? Did the bones of Joseph, which were carried so carefully at the Exodus up to the promised land, convey to the pilgrim people anything more than an assurance that the dead patriarch believed in a national deliverance ? From the memory of his faith there came undoubtedly a call to the pilgrims to believe also in their national restoration to Canaan ; but from the bones there could come no strength or life. And if there had not in addition been at the head of the advancing host a living Leader in cloudy and fiery pillar to encourage and sustain them, the probabilities are that they never would have reached the land of promise. In the very same way there could have come no life or strength or power from a dead Christ. But when the Lord was raised from the dead and became alive for evermore, and when He showed Himself to His disciples, they all felt impulse and quickening radiating from a living Saviour. As He breathed upon them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," they felt that they had provided for them in the person of a living Saviour a "quickenning Spirit."¹

An embalmed Christ would have been powerless.

A living Saviour radiates life and power upon His disciples.

Christ became "a quickenning Spirit."

¹ John xx. 22 ; 1 Cor. xv. 45.

The biography of Jesus continued in the "Acts of the Apostles" and after.

And then at Pentecost and after, it was from a living Saviour that the tried disciples drew their life. Hence, as has been observed, what Luke, the beloved physician, gives us in the Acts of the Apostles is the second volume of the biography of a living Lord. The Gospel was an account of what Jesus "BEGAN to do and teach," while the *Acts of the Apostles* contain an account of what the living Lord continued both to do and teach by the Holy Ghost in and through His apostles. In His name they work wonders; in His strength they are equal to every emergency. It is the Lord who adds to the Church daily, who makes the lame to walk and the dead to live. In short, a living Saviour is seen behind the struggling Apostolic Church, sustaining and enabling His servants to accomplish the wonders they did.

In the very same way, the Saviour in the power of His endless life, is ever present with His suffering people in all ages, and becomes to His disciples generation after generation the source of life and fountain-head of power. The disciples die, and pass out of the field of vision, but Jesus abides. The under-shepherds lie down with their sheep for their last long rest, but the Chief-Shepherd keeps watch century after century. The Church—the Body of Christ—is a kingdom where a living Saviour is the recognized centre of authority and of life, and from His sacred Person there radiates all

The Chief-Shepherd at His ceaseless vigils.

the spiritual life and power realised by His servants. Just as the Angel of the Covenant marched in cloudy and fiery pillar before the hosts of Israel in the wilderness, and by His living presence encouraged them to proceed, so does our living Saviour advance at the head of His believing people, inspiring them by His presence, imparting to them His Spirit, sustaining them amid the trials of this present life, and giving them the sure and certain hope of at last entering the land of promise. We have a living Saviour, therefore, always in our midst with His life-giving powers to quicken our dead hearts, to reinforce our failing energies, and to make our souls happy in His service. It is the great endowment of the Church, the presence within her of an immortal Saviour.

The living Saviour leads on His Church through the wilderness to the promised land.

III. *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ proclaims His supreme Headship over redeemed humanity for ever.* The resurrection not only proclaims an accepted sacrifice and a living Saviour, but also declares Him to be the Divine Son. That this is a distinct revelation through the resurrection will be evident from one quotation out of several which might be made. Thus the Apostle Paul tells us, in his Epistle to the Romans, that Jesus—whose servant he claimed to be, and through whom, he tells us, he received grace and apostleship,—“was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,”

The resurrection reveals a Divine Son

and also that He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead."¹

Incarnation and resurrection are complementary facts.

We have here the incarnation and the resurrection brought into close proximity. Jesus was born, and He was raised from the dead. It is most important that we should realise the relation in which these two stupendous facts stand to each other. When carefully considered, they will be seen to be complementary. Incarnation is the entrance of God the Son into union with human nature, that its liabilities on account of sin might be discharged. But the union of divinity and humanity in the incarnation might only have continued for a season. It was the Divine Being clothing Himself with a *mortal* nature, that He might suffer and die for the sinful sons of men. And even if such a temporary union had been all that God undertook, vast honour would thus have been conferred upon human nature. We might still have said with pride, "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him [or "laid hold of," Revised Version] the seed of Abraham."² But not content with incarnation, He passed on to resurrection, and thereby carried the union of divinity and humanity into everlasting victory. The birth at Bethlehem was a great honour con-

Resurrection carries the Divine union with man into everlasting victory.

¹ Rom. i. 4, Revised Version; also cf. Lechler's *Apostolic and Post-apostolic Times*, Vol. ii. p. 51, etc.

² Heb. ii. 16.

ferred upon the human race, but Christ's resurrection from the tomb of Joseph was a greater honour still. It was the declaration of the union of the Divine nature with human nature for evermore.¹ In strict accordance with this, we find the Father reserving for the resurrection-morning His address to the Son about having begotten Him, as we learn from St. Paul's address at Antioch. The Apostle says:

Resurrection Sonship excels that of Incarnation.

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that He raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.”²

It is as if the Sonship in Incarnation was as nothing compared with the Sonship revealed by the Resurrection.

Now, if it be asked how the resurrection of Jesus from the dead could declare His Divine Sonship, we reply that He was condemned before the Jewish Sanhedrim upon this very charge that He claimed to be the Son of God.³ The charge made against Him at the Roman trial was different, to suit the exigencies of Roman law. He was charged before Pilate with making Himself a King, and thus being guilty of treason against Cæsar. But His resur

Resurrection vindicates Christ's claim to be the Son of God.

¹ Cf. *Incarnation and Resurrection: the Essentials of Christianity*, by Rev. R. Lorimer, *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, Oct., 1877.

² Acts xiii. 32, 33, Revised Version.

Luke xxii. 70, 71.

rection constituted His vindication on both grounds. It proclaimed at once the Father's acquiescence in His claim of Sonship and in His claim of Kingship. His resurrection from the dead was the verdict of heaven upon the veracity of all His claims.¹ We can conceive of no more powerful evidence that His claim of Sonship is just.

The Father and Holy Spirit co-operating in Christ's resurrection.

But we should not be forming a right conception of our Lord if we stopped here, and allowed the idea to be entertained that in His resurrection He was altogether passive. Certainly the Father and the Holy Spirit are both represented as co-operating in His resurrection. Thus, it is said, He was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father."² And again, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you."³ But there are other passages which distinctly teach, that, in the resurrection, Jesus *resumed* His life. Thus His declaration about rebuilding the destroyed temple of His body implies this; and He declares, in another place, that He had received the Father's commandment to lay down His life and to "take it again."⁴ Christ's resumption of life was, there-

Jesus also in resurrection resumed His life.

¹ Cf. Pruvot's *La Resurrection de Jésus Christ: Sa Verité et son Importance*, pp. 320-333.

² Rom. vi. 4.

³ Rom. viii. 11, Revised Version.

⁴ John ii. 11-21; x. 17, 18.

fore, strictly speaking, a "self-resurrection."¹ Accordingly we find an essential difference between the conditions of the earlier "raisings" and the resurrection of Christ. In the Old Testament cases there always was a human instrumentality. Elijah and Elisha, in the first two cases, laid their warm and living bodies on the dead, and life returned; in the third case, the instrumentality employed was the bones of the dead Elisha; but in every case the restoration to life was effected, not from within, but from without. In the New Testament series, the power proceeded from Him who, at the grave of Lazarus, declared, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." But when we turn to our Lord's own resurrection, we find that it takes place from within. No human being is present to assist or secure the resurrection; none but hostile guards are about the sepulchre. The power is all from Himself; so that, strictly speaking, Jesus is not a resuscitated because passive individual, but He rises as "the resurrection and the life." He has the vivifying force inherent in Himself, so that He can take His dead body and reanimate it, and rebuild the shattered temple in the appointed time. Moreover, the "raisings" in the Old Testament are so conditioned as to bring out clearly the fact that the resurrection power did not reside in the prophets

The raisings from the dead were from without; Christ's resurrection was from within.

Christ rose as "the resurrection and the life."

¹ Cf. Liddon's *Easter Sermons*, vol. 1., pp. 120-133.

Resurrection power came from beyond the prophets.

"The fountain of life" is found in Christ's person.

Eternal honour is conferred on the human race by Christ's resurrection to an immortal human life.

employed: for after the living Elijah and the living Elisha have been used as instrumentalities, in the third and last case it is the dead Elisha's bones which are made instrumental in the quickening of the dead. Could any arrangement more beautifully demonstrate that the resurrection power came from beyond the prophets? But when Christ comes on the scene, resurrection-power becomes centred in a person. It is as "the resurrection and the life" that He raises Jairus' daughter, the widow's son at Nain, and Lazarus; and it is as "having life in Himself" that He rises on the third day out of the tomb.¹ We have, in short, reached "the fountain of life" in the person of Him who raised Himself from the dead.

Now all this goes to substantiate the truth that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a declaration of His Divine nature and Sonship. In the resurrection, redeemed humanity received as its perpetual head and sovereign the Divine Son.

What an honour is thus bestowed upon our race! God has actually entered into union with us, He has stooped to share our fortunes and regulate our destiny, and He has done so not for a time merely, but for ever. In the light of the resurrection of Jesus, then, we can afford to smile at the efforts made to degrade human nature to the mere animal level. When God has identified

¹ John v. 26.

Himself with our race, when He has linked, so to speak, His own fortunes with ours, we may well lift up our heads and feel that our redemption from all evil draweth nigh. Nothing is so calculated to give dignity to our race, as the gift through resurrection of a Divine Head, and this for ever.

IV. *Through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ the Father secures the salvation and sanctification of sinners.* We have before us an accepted sacrifice, a living Saviour, and a Divine Head for the human race, all provided for us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We wish now to appreciate how this "salvation-fact," as it has been called, enters into human experience and is owned of God in securing our salvation and sanctification.¹ And here the first passage which is likely to suggest itself to an attentive student of Scripture is 1 Pet. i. 3-5, where it is said—

Christ's resurrection becomes a "salvation-fact" and secures our sanctification.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."²

It is clear from this passage that it is this supreme fact of our Lord's resurrection which God the

¹ Cf. Krüger's *Die Auferstehung Jesu in ihrer Bedeutung für den Christlichen Glauben*, s. 82, et seq.; Reich's *Die Auferstehung des Herrn als Heils Thatfache*, ss. 277-314.

² Revised Version.

The resurrection transforms human experience by the blessing of the Spirit.

Father uses to produce "a living hope" within sinful souls. It is the means He employs by the Spirit to produce the marvellous transformation in human experience, which consists in our passing out of a state of condemnation into a state of acceptance, out of spiritual death into newness of life, out of conscious alienation and enmity into a sense of sonship and of sanctification. Some little detail must be entered into here, that we may have at least in outline the practical significance of the great fact before us. And here we would observe

(1) *The Resurrection of Jesus affords the great assurance of the believer's justification before God.* When we are enlightened by the Spirit of God as to our nature and standing before the Father, we are humbled to the very dust **by** a sense of our guilt and defilement. Our cry is that of David out of the depths,

"If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand."¹

Relief from a sense of guilt through the resurrection.

Yet, strange to say, our relief comes through turning once again intelligently towards Christ's resurrection. For here is St. Paul's comment on the great fact in its bearing upon our standing before God:—

"Jesus our Lord was," he says, "delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justifi-

¹ Psalm cxxx. 3.

cation.”¹ From what has been already advanced about the risen Jesus as an accepted sacrifice, it will be evident that what as guilty sinners we have got to do is to realise that on Him was laid “the iniquity of us all;” that in consequence He was delivered up to death; but, being raised again from the dead, He has in His resurrection assured us of our justification. To quote Lechler on the point:

“It [*i.e.* Rom. iv. 25] does not expressly state that the raising of Jesus from the dead is the efficient cause of our δικαίωσις [‘justification’], which would be at variance with other plain testimonies, *e.g.* Rom. v. 9: δικαιωθέντες ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ [‘being justified by His blood’]. On the contrary, both words and context authorise the sense that Jesus was raised from the dead because God wished to justify us (by the death of His Son), so that the expiatory death establishes in itself the δικαίωσις [‘justification’], and the resurrection of Christ assures us of the certainty of grace.”²

Resurrection conveys assurance of God's grace.

The first step for our guilty souls to take, therefore, is to consider the deep significance of our Lord's resurrection; for if we give our whole hearts to the contemplation of it, it will be owned by the good Spirit to convey to our believing souls the needful positive proof and assurance of our pardon and acceptance before God.

(2) *It is through the risen and living Saviour we are regenerated.* As we have just seen, it is the sympathetic study of the resurrection of

¹ Rom. iv. 25, Revised Version.

² The third edition of his *Apostolic and Post-apostolic Times*, which has just been translated into English. Vol. ii. pp. 53, 54.

Christ, which, by the blessing of the Spirit leads us into a sense of justification. And in like manner, our regeneration as a whole will be seen to come to us by means of a risen and living Saviour.

Insufficiency of the first birth implies the necessity of a second, a birth from above.

Now, all that Scripture teaches is to this effect, that our first birth has been insufficient, that with all the advantages of transmitted and inherited tendencies to good, there have been transmitted still more powerful tendencies to evil, so that the best thing which could happen to us would be a "second birth." Not of course that, as Nicodemus put it, we are to enter a second time into our mother's womb and be born; but we are to be "born of the Spirit," "born from above," born by virtue of a new order which is altogether spiritual. Now the risen Jesus is the source of this new and higher life. Hence He is called, as we have already seen, "a quickening," or as the Revised Version has it, "life-giving Spirit."¹ This risen Jesus is the second Adam, to whom we trace our spiritual parentage. From Him are transmitted those tendencies to good which we all need if we are to battle successfully with the evil within and around us, and persevere until in another life we have complete victory over all sin, and perfect fellowship with God.

Jesus is the second Adam, and the head of a spiritual race.

Hence we are to believe that through Jesus the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

risen Saviour the new nature is transmitted to the regenerate. It comes of course by means of the Divine Word, so that it is said, We are "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God which liveth and abideth."¹ The Holy Spirit is the agent in producing it. When He enters He proceeds to copy into human nature the lineaments of our risen Lord, so that His image is reproduced within us.

The incorruptible seed of the Word of God is used by the Spirit in our regeneration.

It is in this spiritual propagation, in this regeneration of men through the Spirit and Word of God, that all our hope for our race lies. A higher order of beings is what we expect, and the risen Christ steps in to furnish these by the power of His Spirit and through His Word. We call them "men of God;" we recognise that they are "partakers of the Divine nature;" we call them "saints." The resurrection of Jesus is thus seen to be the fountain of the regeneration of men.

A higher order of beings is thus furnished through the spiritual development of our race.

(3) *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ supplies a most interesting type of spiritual experience.* We must here try to realise the spiritual experience into which our Lord through resurrection passed.² And here the first element which claims attention is His *conscious separation from all responsibility for human sin.* In resurrection life He realised that

Our Lord had a most instructive spiritual experience in and through His resurrection.

¹ 1 Pet. i. 23, Revised Version.

² Cf. Reich's *Die Auferstehung des Herrn als Heils-Thatsache*, s. 238, et seq.

He was delivered through resurrection from a sense of responsibility for human sin.

He had "died unto sin once," that He had "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and that guilt, having been atoned for, was for ever taken away from Him. Being delivered because of our offences,¹ He felt Himself free from all responsibility as He rose victorious from the tomb.

Again, he realised, as we have seen, that He was "alive for evermore." He had risen to die no more. "Death could have no more dominion over Him."²

He realised His immortality.

He could say, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore."³ He felt that He had become "the undying One," that He had entered the immortal life, and was beyond the reach of mortality.

His resurrection life was brimful of sympathy.

Again, His new life was one of *intensest sympathy*. Although this is not a new feature in His spiritual life, it is well to notice that the eleven recorded manifestations after His resurrection are brimful of sympathy for His downcast disciples. Mary Magdalene and the holy women, penitent Peter and the other Apostles, and the entire company of the disciples, are one and all the objects of His tender sympathy and consideration.

His new life was intensely practical.

Again, His new life took a *practical direction*. For as He visits the disciples it is, as Luke tells us, to speak about the things concerning the kingdom of God.⁴ In fact some go so far as to

¹ *Id.*—Rom. iv. 25 ; Cf. Godet, *in loco*. ² Rom. vi. 9.

³ Rev. i. 18.

⁴ Acts i. 3.

say He was organizing the coming Christianity during the forty days. His "flying visits" were brimful of most blessed purpose. He was preparing His disciples for their conquest of the world.

Finally here, His new life was in the strictest sense *heavenly*. Whatever may be the exact interpretation of His declaration to Mary on the resurrection morning, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father, and my God and your God,"¹ one thing is clear and beyond question, His intense occupation with the heavenly world. His life after the resurrection was a purely heavenly one, and His terrestrial manifestations were mere interludes in a hidden and heavenly life. His affections and thoughts were set upon heavenly things all the days. Even supposing that the ascension from Olivet was the first ascent to God after the resurrection, it is plain that His thoughts gravitated towards the heavenly world all the time.

His new
life was
heavenly.

His heart
in heaven.

"The word heaven," it has been beautifully said, "has a local meaning, even in spiritual language. But it has also a moral meaning. Heaven, before being a *place*, is a *state*. Heaven is where God reigns. This is why it is needful that heaven should enter into our heart before, and in order to our being able to enter into heaven. But heaven, the reign of God, is the reign of His Spirit. And it is because Jesus Christ carried within Him this reign upon the earth, that He could say to Nicodemus at the beginning of His ministry, 'No one has ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, *who is in heaven*.' From the place where God and His Spirit reign, Jesus has come here below where *sin reigns*."

Heaven a
state as
well as a
place.

¹ John xx. 17.

But in quitting heaven as a place, He has not quitted heaven as a state. This is why upon the earth, during His terrestrial life, the Son of Man is in heaven. He is in heaven by His union with the Spirit."¹

Now, if this state of heavenly-mindedness was maintained while the iniquities of us all lay upon Him, how intense must the heavenly-mindedness have become when He got past the cross and the grave, past the responsibilities of human sin, and was in the victorious joy of resurrection-life!

Christ's
experience
is the model
of ours.

Now this experience of our risen Lord is meant to be the type or model of our own experience. This was Paul's idea when he wrote the words, "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."² We have already seen that Jesus passed through the experience of death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. As the voluntary victim for human sin He died, then He was buried for a season out of sight of living men, then He rose into a new life, and finally ascended into heaven to sit at God's right hand for evermore. Now the Scriptural idea is that all these experiences of Christ in a spiritual but real sense are reproduced in the experience of believers, so that the facts of His history are transformed into religious experiences. Lessing's difficulty,

We are to
pass through
the ex-
perience of
death,
burial,
resurrection,
and
ascension.

¹ Rollier, *La Nature du Fait de la Resurrection de Jésus Christ* "Revue Theologique" for 1872.

² Rom. vi. 4; Liddon's *Easter Sermons*, vol. II., pp. 18-36.

referred to at the outset, becomes absolutely untenable in the light of resurrection experience.

First, then, the Lord enables us to reckon ourselves to be *dead indeed unto sin*.¹ We must carefully distinguish between the two Scriptural expressions, "dead in trespasses and sins," and "dead unto sin." The first of these represents our natural state, out of which we are delivered by resurrection power. The raising of our souls out of the state of spiritual death is identical with the regeneration of which we have already spoken. But when the risen Lord has taken us in hand, and made us to live before Him, He enables us to die daily unto sin. Or rather, He calls upon us to reckon death unto sin as the *ideal* which we are to strive to realise daily. To put it as realistically as we can do, *the Lord erects a cross within us* whereon we are to crucify our old nature.² Thus Paul says, "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."³ And so "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts."⁴ "We mortify our members which are upon the earth."⁵ "We put off the old man, with his deeds."⁶ Not less surely, if we are regenerate, shall we die *to sin* than our Master died *for sin*.

The ideal of being always dead unto sin.

Christ erects a cross within us.

We die to sin as Christ died for sin.

¹ Rom. vi. 11.

² Cf. *Amour et Foi, Impressions d'un Pèlerin*, par F. de Rougemont, pp. 77-84.

³ Rom. vi. 6. ⁴ Gal. v. 24. ⁵ Col. iii. 5. ⁶ Col. iii. 9.

We must have a crucifixion of our old nature just as real as the Master's crucifixion for us.

Secondly, the Lord will enable us to realise *a burial in our experience*. Paul is the only apostle who makes a spiritual use of the burial of our Lord.¹ His idea seems to be that the new convert is to get buried by his baptism out of his worldly associations into a hidden life with the people of God. "Know ye not," he says, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."²

The burial by baptism out of worldly associations into the hidden life of the people of God.

Thirdly, the Lord will at the same time *enable us to enter by resurrection experience into newness of life*. We have already sketched our Lord's own resurrection experience. It consisted at least in these elements, a conscious separation from all responsibility for human sin, an assurance that He was alive for evermore, intense sympathy for downcast disciples, directions given to them of a practical character, and heavenly-mindedness. Now we may look for and ought to find all these elements in our own experience as regenerated. We ought to realise a sense of sin

Resurrection experience becomes ours.

¹ Cf. Sabatier's *L'Apôtre Paul*, Deuxième Edition, p. 82.

² Rom. vi. 3, 4.

removed, an assurance that it is everlasting life we have got from Christ, intense sympathy for human suffering, a practical turn in our Christian life, and heavenly-mindedness. In short, our Lord's post-resurrection life should be a model for our Christian life in its gladness, helpfulness, and heavenly-mindedness. We should not only "set our mind on the things that are above" [Revised Version], but we should rise in rapture into ascension experience, praising Him "who hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."¹ 'Our citizenship is in heaven.'²

Ascension experience also ours.

(4) *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes the great incentive to morality.* The simplicity of Christian morals affords a striking contrast to the complexity of rival systems. It bases morality upon personal relations. It brings Jesus Christ before us as rightful Lord of the conscience, and asks us to be faithful to Him, and then we shall not be false either to self or to any other man. The dramatist recommends us to be true to ourselves, and then we shall be true to others; but Christianity calls upon us to be true to Christ, and all other relations shall be righteously regarded. But now let us suppose for a moment that Jesus did not rise from the dead, how would

Christian morals a matter of personal relation.

The risen Christ is the person round whom we are to rally.

¹ Col. iii. 2; Eph. ii. 6. ² Phil. iii. 20, Revised Version.

If Christ be not risen the enthusiasm of Christian morals is lost.

it fare with Christian morals? It is clear that we should at once lose the enthusiastic devotion to a now living Person in which Christian morals consist. And along with this loss of enthusiasm there would come the painful sense of being yet in our sins, and of being in utter uncertainty about the fate of the dead.¹

"Immortality of the soul" is too shadowy a doctrine to be effective in morals.

To this it will be said by those who are prepared on such easy terms to surrender the "power of His resurrection," that there are substitutes for this resurrection assurance available for the moralist. For instance, there is the *immortality of the soul*, which may be made morally effective, in place of the gospel doctrine of the resurrection of the body. But we ask those who think this doctrine morally so effective, if they have any method of proving the immortality of the soul which will easily commend itself to the popular mind? After all our reasoning, are we not in a state of considerable uncertainty regarding that doctrine, apart from this supreme fact of Christ's resurrection? We are not insinuating that the doctrine is doubtful; far from it; but we are simply looking at it as a working and practical doctrine. Now, as a matter of fact, the doctrine did not keep the heathens who believed in it from sinking into the grossest sensuality. Make the body nothing, and the soul as immortal as you please, and men

Pagan believers in the immortality of the soul lived often very sensual lives.

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 17-19.

will go in for the sins and indulgence of the flesh under the idea that death will put a period to their infirmities, and set the soul like a captive bird free. This was manifestly the idea at Corinth and elsewhere.¹ We are only tied to this body for a season, let us get out of it what enjoyment we can ; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die, and the serious after piece will come on us soon enough.

But others are ready to say, We do not need the doubtful doctrine of the immortality of the soul to secure good morals ; we can secure these by the undoubted doctrine of *the immortality of the race*. Though *we* do not survive, the race will ; and as we work for the good of the race, we have motive enough to inspire us. Suppose that the race were immortal in the sense of these worldly moralists, then is this doctrine of the race's immortality a sufficient motive power ? What do we find these benefactors of a reputedly immortal race doing for the race ? Do we find them organizing missions and far-reaching philanthropic efforts ? We have logicians and economists, like John Stuart Mill ; poets of sorrow and despair, like George Eliot ; philosophers with endless programmes and " data of ethics," like Herbert Spencer ; but when, by the side of these, we place the names of such philanthropists as William

Epicureanism favoured by the view of the soul alone being immortal.

"Immortality of the race" a poor substitute in practical morals for the resurrection.

Its believers are not active missionaries and propagandists, but self-indulgent intellectualists.

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 29-34.

Philanthrop-
ists can
bear
comparison
with our re-
volutionary
moralists.

Wilberforce and John Howard, or of such mission-aries as David Brainerd, Henry Martyn, J. Cole-ridge Patteson, and David Livingstone, we are surely warranted in affirming that there is not one of all the band of revolutionary moralists that is fit to unloose the shoe-latchets of those who, as publishers of peace, have been found on all the mountains on their errands of mercy and love!

Enthusiastic
devotion to
a risen
Saviour is
the secret
of good
morals.

It comes to pass, therefore, that there is no doctrine to be compared with that of the re-surrection of Christ as a working, moral power. Given a risen Christ, then we are in a position to live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.¹ Enthusiastic devotion to this living Saviour becomes easy, glorious, sublime. Round Him as centre all other relations will revolve in sweetest harmony. Having learned to love Him as our great Brother-man, we find it wholesome and easy to love our brother also, to love our neighbour as ourselves. And this en-thusiastic devotion is seen to pass onwards into another life and another world, so that the morality of the present is one in kind with the morality of the immortal future. Round the one risen and reigning Saviour the devotion of souls in heaven as well as souls on earth is continually gathering, and the morality of all worlds is seen to be one!

(5) *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ throws*

an air of consecration over the believer's time. We have just seen how essential the resurrection of Christ is as an incentive to Christian morals. We are now to notice how it has entered into the division of human time, and secured a weekly festival.

“Our Lord Jesus,” it has been well said, “made that day [‘the first day of the week’] in a special sense His own, by rising from the dead on it, and by connecting it with His first six appearances after His resurrection. On the first Lord’s day, He appeared five times. After the lapse of a week, on the next Lord’s Day, He appeared to the Eleven, having during the interval, so far as we know, remained out of sight. The Day of Pentecost, on which the Holy Ghost came down from heaven and created the Church of Christ, also fell on a Lord’s Day, seven weeks after the day of resurrection. And from this time we find scattered hints of its observance, as when St. Paul spent a week at Troas, in the course of his third missionary journey. ‘Upon the first day of the week,’ we are told, ‘the disciples came together to break bread,’ that is, to partake of the Holy Communion; and Paul preached unto them! So when St. Paul is giving directions to the Corinthians for a collection of money on behalf of the poor members of the Church in Palestine, he writes, ‘Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.’ This passage shows that the first day in the week was then recognised as a natural day for especial religious efforts; and it is here connected with what we should call a weekly offering. St. Paul tells the Corinthians that he had already given a similar order to the Galatian Churches. When, then, some years afterwards, we find St. John, an exile at Patmos, saying that he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, we know what he means. The day was already observed by Apostolic Christians as the weekly festival of the resurrection.”¹

The Lord's Day became notable in the Church of the risen Saviour.

Now, to some minds, it may seem a small matter that the resurrection should thus endow us

¹ Liddon's *Easter Sermons*, vol. II., pp. 82, 83.

Time con-
secrated for
us through
the
resurrection.

Resur-
rection and
creation
have been
consecrating
factors in
man's time
in the two
dispensa-
tions.

with a Lord's Day; but the more the arrangement is looked into, the more it will be found to throw an air of consecration over all our time. For when this weekly festival is spent in the proper resurrection spirit, it is seen to be but the restful prelude to a week of consecrated toil. To our risen Lord we dedicate the day, and are reminded as we do so of all we owe to His death and resurrection. In the hours of holy rest we realise the right of the risen Lord to all our time, and so a spirit of consecration filters down the whole working week. And thus the resurrection of the Master stands at the head of the Christian era, claiming man's time, just as the creation and the deliverance from Egypt stood at the head of the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, and claimed due recognition from those who lived under them.

“The Christian motive,” it has been said, “for observing the Lord's Day is the resurrection of Christ from the dead. That truth is to the Christian creed what the creation of the world out of nothing is to the Jewish. The Lord's Day marks the completed Redemption, as the Sabbath had marked the completed Creation.”¹

As we rejoice then on each recurring Lord's Day in the completed redemption in which we are allowed to share, we realise that the resurrection of our Lord has laid its consecrating hand, so to speak, on the whole week, and we dare not spend it for mean or selfish ends.

¹ Liddon, *ut supra*.

V. *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ throws welcome light upon the doctrine of the last things.*

Now there are three distinct stages in our Lord's experience after death: first, a state of conscious expectancy, during which, as He Himself prophetically informed the dying malefactor, He would be in Paradise and able to commune with His freshly found disciple.¹ This lasted from death to resurrection. Secondly, resurrection; and lastly, the consciousness of a final judgment in and through the resurrection. Now it is absolutely necessary to face these three distinct experiences of Christ if we are to have clear ideas about the doctrine of the last things. We shall look at them in their order.

Our Lord's experience after death was threefold.

(1) *Between death and resurrection our Lord was in a state of blessed expectancy.*

Of the reality of this "intermediate state" there can in our Lord's case be no manner of doubt. After death He passed to Paradise. There He was joined by the saved malefactor, and each was *so organised* as to hold blessed communion. Dr. Westcott has said that

"Intermediate state" has its organization.

"as far as our experience reaches, a will can only make itself felt in and through an organism with which it is connected."²

Some organization, we may assume, is needful for the fellowship of the intermediate state. What this organization is to be we can but dimly discern; but one thing is clear at all events, that we have

¹ Luke xxiii. 43.

² *Gospel of the Resurrection*, p. 140.

Inter-
mediate
condition is
not to be
confounded
with the
resurrection-
body.

The fancy
about the
soul weav-
ing for
itself a
resurrection
body.

Caution
needed in
speculating
upon these
last things.

no right to confound this intermediate condition with the resurrection-body. This is the fallacy into which certain theorists have fallen, who would persuade us that the resurrection is past already so far as those already dead are concerned. If Christ, as they allege, assumed the "spiritual body" as soon as He expired on the cross, then the resurrection on the third morning, was, so far as He was concerned, an act of supererogation, and could only have been to produce a certain impression on the disciples. In opposition to the prevailing fancy about the soul weaving for itself a "spiritual body," and becoming at death independent of what Professor Bush rather contemptuously calls, quoting Stephenson's *Christology*, its "relics,"¹ it may be sufficient to quote the wise words of Dr. Westcott:

"Our present body is not, in any way, as far as we can see, due primarily to the action of the soul, which acts through and upon it; and when the body is dissolved, the only action of the soul of which we can have naturally any knowledge ceases. It may have some inherent energy, in virtue of which it manifests itself throughout the ages, now in this form, now in that. It may, but that seems harder to conceive, have gained on earth the means of realising a personal existence hereafter. It may, as many thought, even among God's ancient people, go back to Him who gave it, and continue to exist only as part of His Infinite Being. Our utter incapacity of forming a clear conception of any mode of existence differing in essence from our own, and not simply in extent of similar powers, forces us to contemplate these and other alternatives, and to withhold our judgment till we gain new light. If we look

¹ Bush's *Anastasis*, s. p. 81.

within or without, we have absolutely no analogy to carry our thoughts one step onward into a realm wholly unknown ; none to show that the soul will exert a power there which has been undeveloped or dormant here."¹

We are consequently shut up to the express words of revelation ; and so all that we can do is to comfort ourselves with the assurance of the Apostle "that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."² God will provide the soul immediately on death with such an organization as will prevent its feeling "unclothed" in the intermediate state, and will enable it to exercise communion with its fellows.³ That this intermediate state will be one of blessed expectancy, is clear from our Lord's own case. He was awaiting in paradisaical bliss the resurrection experience, when He should receive His risen and glorified body. When we consider "the pleasures of hope," we can see in this arrangement of the intermediate state a wisely constructed element of pleasure for those who, like the dying malefactor, have learned, even though it be in life's last hours, to put their trust in Jesus.

No uncloth-
ing of the
soul allowed
by a
gracious
God.

"Pleasures
of hope"
in the inter-
mediate
state.

(2) *Through resurrection our Lord was endowed with a glorious spiritual body.* There has been a

¹ *Gospel of the Resurrection*, pp. 151-2.

² 2 Cor. v. 1, Revised Version.

³ Goebel, in his interesting work *Osterbeute* (s. 113), says quaintly that the "Head" will not allow His "members" to be unclothed.

Bush's
want of
definiteness
in treating
the spiritual
body.

good deal of fruitless speculation about the nature of the spiritual body. For example, Professor Bush published a work on the subject of the resurrection, in which he adopts the views of Swedenborg on this subject; and yet, though his whole work hinges on the nature of the spiritual body, he refuses to define it. All the light he sheds on the subject is that it is

“some exceedingly refined and ethereal substance with which the *vital principle* is connected, but of the nature of which we are ignorant, and which we denominate *body* from the inadequacy of language to afford any more fitting term.”¹

The Manicheanism
underlying
his views.

Speaking further on of our Saviour's resurrection-body, he declares that it cannot have been “material,” so that his whole theory is really the old Manichean idea of the essential evil inherent in matter.² All that he gives us as a spiritual body is really something like the “ghost” which Keim thinks came to convince the disciples of Christ's continued existence.³ Now, in opposition to such unsatisfactory speculations, we maintain that it is only from the resurrection-life of Jesus that we can get any clear conception of the nature of the spiritual body. And here we cannot do better

The
spiritual
body is to
be under-
stood by
means of
Christ's
resurrection-
body.

¹ Bush's *Anastasis*, Second Edition, p. 145.

² *Ibid.* p. 153, etc.

³ The same view will be found in Whiton's *Gospel of the Resurrection*, a work which has been published in this country under the title *Beyond the Shadow*, and which reproduces in briefer form Bush's Swedenborgian speculation.

than quote the remarks of Dr. Westcott in his *Revelation of the Risen Lord*. He says :

“As we fix our thoughts steadily upon them (*i.e.*, Christ’s different appearances after the resurrection), we learn how our life is independent of its present conditions ; how we also can live through death ; how we can retain all the issues of the past without being bound by the limitations under which they were shaped. Christ rose from the grave changed and yet the same ; and in Him we have the pledge and type of our rising. Christ was changed. He was no longer subject to the laws of the material order to which His earthly life was previously conformed. As has been well said, ‘What was natural to Him before is now miraculous ; what was before miraculous is now natural.’ Or, to put the thought in another form, in our earthly life the spirit is manifested through the body ; in the life of the Risen Christ, the Body is manifested (may we not say so ?) through the Spirit. He ‘appears,’ and no longer is seen coming. He is found present, no one knows from whence ; He passes away, no one knows whither. He stands in the midst of the group of apostles *when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews*. *He vanishes out of the sight of the disciples, whose eyes were opened that they should know Him. And at last, as they were looking, He was taken from them, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.*”¹

Our Lord’s resurrection-body is the material dominated by the spiritual.

Hence we would regard the spiritual body in the light of our Lord’s manifestations after His resurrection as a material organization so penetrated and sublimated by the Spirit within, as to be its perfect, unwearied, and responsive instrument. We believe that there is no foundation for the fancy of some theologians, that our Lord’s resurrection-body was in a state of transition during the great forty days preceding His final ascension. His body as raised was in its final and spiritual form.

Our Lord not in a transition state during the great forty days.

¹ pp. 7, 8.

Spirit commanding matter.

“Life for man,” it has been said, “according to the notion which the Word of God gives us of it, consists in the interpenetration of matter by spirit, in the union of an individual spirit, conscious of itself, with a portion of organised matter, of an interior principle of liberty and activity which commands, with exterior organs which serve and which execute. . . Life is abundant and intense in proportion as the matter of the human body is penetrated by the spirit, and as the spirit is better served by the material organs. Activity, spontaneity are the essential characteristics of spirit: inertia, passivity are the fundamental properties of matter; the one demands the other.”¹

Applying this to the case of our Lord, we can see in His spiritual body, the body of His humiliation glorified and perfected as the instrument of the indwelling spirit. He is not after His resurrection limited in action, as He was before. He is freer and more powerful. He can pass from the state of visibility into the state of invisibility at pleasure. He can enter the upper room without troubling the timid inmates to undo the door. He can be here or there with the speed of thought. Spirit has got the full command of matter: spirituality is now supreme. No longer has He to sit wearied beside the well; no longer has he to snatch sleep exposed to terrestrial storms; no longer has He to submit to the sinless infirmities of our nature. He has got beyond these into the victorious experience of an immortal life. He may eat if He pleases; but it is not to satisfy His hunger, it is to remove the doubt of His disciples about the reality of His

Christ enlarged His freedom through resurrection.

He got beyond the sinless infirmities of our nature into victorious experience.

¹ M. Rollier, *La Nature du Fait de la Resurrection de Jésus Christ*. “Revue Theologique” for 1872.

resurrection. He may still have the nail prints in His hands and feet and the spear-gash in His side, but all pain is past, and the disciples are at liberty to finger and handle these wounds which have been kept open for their sake. And when He pleases He can ascend to Heaven and enjoy closest fellowship with God His Father. The "spiritual body" of our Lord is the embodied supremacy of spirit over matter.

The embodied supremacy of spirit over matter.

It is such an instrument that we are to expect from our Lord when He comes from heaven, for as the Apostle clearly puts it,

"Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence, also, we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto Himself."¹

What the relation is between the organization of the intermediate state and the perfect spiritual body we cannot say; but we reasonably hope for a similar experience to our Lord's in this matter of resurrection, and the grace which provides the intermediate organization can unify it with the perfect spiritual body.

The organization of the intermediate state will harmonise with that of the resurrection.

(3) *Through resurrection our Lord received the Father's final judgment upon His career.* God the Father, let it be observed, had pronounced several

¹ Phil. iii. 20, 21, Revised Version.

The Father's judgments upon the Son's career were pronounced from time to time; but the final judgment was reserved for the resurrection.

judgments upon the Son's career during its progress upon earth. Time after time, as the Gospels show, He had audibly pronounced Christ to be His beloved Son, in whom He was ever well pleased.¹ But these judgments were not final. This is beautifully indicated by the last audible voice from heaven before Christ suffered, when in response to the Redeemer's prayer, "Father, glorify Thy name," the Father answered, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."² For the final judgment of the Father we must go, as we shall immediately see, to our Lord's resurrection.

Let us betake ourselves to Athens, that we may listen to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, as he expatiates before the speculative Greeks upon the character of the unknown God and the certainty of a future judgment. Paul declares that the unknown God they ignorantly worship is a Spirit who has been bearing with the sins of men for ages, but He has appointed a day for judgment, and chosen the Judge, and given assurance of that judgment unto all men, in that He has raised Christ from the dead.³ We have thus the resurrection of our Lord set before us as the guarantee of the general judgment. The death of Jesus Christ was, as far as the Father was concerned, the laying upon the Son

Our Lord's resurrection is the guarantee of the general judgment.

¹ Cf. Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; Mark i. 11; ix. 7; Luke iii. 22; x. 35; also 2 Pet. i. 17.

² John xii. 28.

³ Acts xvii. 31.

of the iniquities of us all, which judgment was willingly accepted by Jesus as our substitute. But if this self-sacrificing Redeemer had remained, so far as His body was concerned, in the custody of Joseph's tomb, no public assurance would have been forthcoming that God accepted the sacrifice and was satisfied with it. That anxious hearts and the whole universe might know that He was satisfied, the Father raised Him from the dead. Having been delivered for our offences, He was raised again for our justification.¹ But farther, He was raised in a glorious and incorruptible body, as we have seen. He was magnificently endowed with a spiritual body, a perfect instrument for the perfect spirit it enshrined. The transfiguration was in resurrection renewed and perpetuated, so that the risen Redeemer finds Himself beyond all those limitations which have beset His former life, and is now the free Master of all things. Accordingly we find Him declaring in the glory of the Galilean mount, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."² The Father has thus endowed the risen One with universal power.

Assurance of acceptance was conveyed to Christ through the resurrection.

Christ received "all power" as His due reward.

When we take, then, our risen Redeemer as He emerges from the tomb, we have a final judgment executed in His person. He is supremely endowed, —endowed with all heavenly and earthly power,

¹ Rom. iv. 25.

² Matt. xxviii. 18.

The "Well-done" of Christ is for faithfulness in *all* things.

endowed with it once and for ever, and as such He has been simply judged in righteousness and adequately rewarded for His work. The resurrection of Christ was really the Father's "Well done, good and faithful Servant and Son, Thou hast been faithful in ALL things, therefore be Thou Ruler over all." Here then in our Lord's resurrection we have found an instance of final judgment beyond death, where the individual receives from God the due reward of His deeds, and having been faithful in all things has been endowed with rule over them all. In the resurrection of Christ the administration of the universe was thus handed over to the Being who has proved Himself fitted for it.

The General Judgment is to be a public event, appealing to sense-perception.

Now what we are asked to believe is, that to this supremely endowed and deservedly rewarded Man, Christ Jesus, the Father has committed the General Judgment. Being Man, palpable to sight and sense, as He is to sit on the throne of judgment, then the world to be brought before Him must be brought into the light of day. Had the judgment been arranged before the invisible God, then each one might have been alone with the Great Spirit, and so have escaped a public appearance. But when a Man is to be the Judge, the whole process passes into the region of sense-perception. Embodied human beings are to be brought before the embodied Christ. The judgment consequently is to be a

public one, and for *public purposes*. The day of judgment is not needed to enable the Judge to come to a decision about individuals. It is simply for the public purpose of *revealing* the justice of the Divine administration from first to last. Hence Paul calls it "the day of the REVELATION of the righteous judgments of God."¹ The day of judgment will be His public vindication, when He shall make plain to an assembled universe that He has always acted right.

The Judgment Day is to reveal the righteousness of God.

Of course judgment is going on in the present life, just as the Father's judgments were from time to time pronounced upon His blessed Son before He died. But we dare not regard the judgment executed in the present life as anything more than provisional. Nothing is gained by representing judgment as a continuous *process*, and not a sharply defined *event*.²

Present judgment is provisional.

Judgment may be in process and also have a final and sharply defined issue.

It can be both. There is room in the Divine administration for the continuous process which we see around us, and for the public and general judgment where God's final vindication before the universe shall take place. The following remarks of the Rev. Charles Wolfe, best known by his pathetic poem on the "Burial of Sir John Moore,"

¹ Rom. ii. 5.

² Cf. Munger's *Freedom of Faith*; Whiton's *Gospel of the Resurrection*, which is published in England as *Beyond the Shadow*; and Mulford's *Republic of God*.

sets the present judgment of the world in a striking and true light. In a sermon on Eccles. viii. 11, he says:

God's imperfect judgments in this life are to convince us about a life to come.

"If we found that every man in this life received just what he deserved, and every evil work always brought swift punishment along with it, what should we naturally conclude? There is no future punishment in store; I see nothing wanting, every man has already received the due reward of his works; every thing is already complete, and, therefore, there is nothing to be done in the next world. Or if, on the other hand, there were no punishment visited upon sin at all in this world, we might be inclined to say, 'Tush! God hath forgotten:' He never interferes amongst us; we have no proof of His hatred of sin, or of His determination to punish it; He is gone away far from us, and has left us to follow our own wills and imaginations. So that if sentence were either *perfectly* executed upon the earth, or *not executed at all*, we might have some reason for saying that there was a *chance* of none in a future world. But now it is *imperfectly* executed; just *so much done*, as to say, 'You are watched,—My eye is upon you, I neither slumber nor sleep; and My vengeance slumbereth not.' And yet, at the same time, there is *so little done*, that a man has to look into eternity for the accomplishment."¹

Our Lord's resurrection a first-fruit and pledge of a general and final judgment.

The more the present judgment is looked into, therefore, the more reason will appear for a final and general judgment of which, as we have seen, our Lord's own resurrection is a first-fruit and a pledge.

And here it may not be amiss to notice the peculiar and perfect qualifications that the Judge possesses for the work of the "great Assize," as the general judgment has been frequently called, for the objections to it are largely owing to lack of at-

¹ Wolfe's *Remains*, Sixth Edition, pp. 325-6. The italics are the author's own.

tention to this particular. A merely human judge has to approach each case under the disadvantage of a certain amount of ignorance regarding it. He has accordingly to consume much time and exercise much patience in going through the list of witnesses, and trying to get if possible at all the facts. And the case has often to go before the jury with the conviction on the minds both of judge and jury that perhaps they have not got hold of all the facts. But let the Judge be endowed with omniscience, as is the case with the Judge appointed for the last great Assize, let it be true of Him, "He needeth not that any should testify of man, for He knows what is in man,"¹ then His intuitive insight renders all witness-bearing and cross-examination and charges of juries needless. Every individual as he confronts the Judge will have his case analysed and presented from the fulness of the Judge's own perfect knowledge and with surpassing despatch.

Ignorance of earthly judges and juries may prejudice and delay judgment.

Omniscience of Christ will insure the utmost expedition at "the great Assize."

It only remains for us to briefly summarise the results we have reached in the present Tract. We have tried to show that the resurrection of our Lord is the most significant and pregnant fact in all the range of history. We are convinced that if some of those who have with so light a heart re-

The immense significance of the resurrection of our Lord is established.

¹ John ii. 25.

Resur-
rection of
Christ more
valuable
as a fact
than all
science.

But science
properly so
called
is not
antagonistic
to it.

Its place
in history.

jected the evidence for it, were simply to study it in its manifold bearings, they would come to the conclusion that it is individually worth all the other facts of history put together. There has been nothing approaching it in significance and importance since the creation of the world. Were the alternative presented, as some of the critics would have us to suppose,¹ between accepting the resurrection and accepting science, we have no hesitation in declaring that of the two gifts to mankind the more valuable by far is our Lord's resurrection. But there is no such alternative involved in the case. Blessed be God, we can accept both as His gifts, and believe them to be altogether harmonious. This fact, as we have found in the present Tract, enters into history with dominating power; it is also of the utmost dogmatic, moral, and spiritual value. The following summary may be offered of our results.

I.—HISTORIC VALUE.

It is in perfect unison with contemporary history—it regulates the Christian week—it has been the fountain from which the revolution we call Christianity has issued—every revival in the Church, every awakening in the world, has been from the radiant personality of a risen Saviour.

¹ Cf. Macan on *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*; Pfeleiderer's *Paulinismus*, etc.

II.—DOGOMATIC VALUE.

a. God is shown by the resurrection to be Moral Governor, and Redeemer of mankind. Its fruitfulness in the department of doctrine.

b. Man is shown to be fallen, yet capable of redemption, and heir of a glorious inheritance.

c. Jesus Christ is shown to be sinless, Divine, the Regenerator of mankind, with immortal honour and influence in the victorious resurrection-life.

d. Worship also centres in the Lord's Day, the resurrection festival.

e. The Last Things derive all their reality from this historic fact, a future life, resurrection, and judgment, being thus brought to light and made palpable in and by this gospel of the resurrection.

III.—MORAL VALUE.

Christian morals, as we have seen, gather round the Person of a risen Saviour—we learn to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. Its power in the region of morals.

IV.—SPIRITUAL VALUE.

We find that the resurrection becomes trans-figured from a historic fact into a spiritual power, so that we experience a resurrection within us, and enter into newness of life. This new life passes onwards and upwards in heavenliness of character, until it melts away into that better world into which the risen Saviour has entered. Its spiritual power.

Before such a wondrous fact as this, therefore, we may well pause, assured that it is no accident of history, but the necessary truths of the Eternal Reason taking shape in a supreme and saving fact, upon whose immovable foundations every intelligent soul may well rest.



BUDDHISM:
A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST
BETWEEN
BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY
BY
HENRY ROBERT REYNOLDS, D.D.

Argument of the Tract.

BUDDHISM and CHRISTIANITY are compared and contrasted in respect to their external resemblances, and fundamental and essential divergencies and antitheses, viz. : their local origin; the histories of their founders; their relation to the past; the place given in both to the death of the founders; the basis of the two systems, and their historical development as organised societies; the resemblances are shown to be illusory in the extreme; the differences vital and all-important.

Christ revealed the Father—took human sorrows and death on Himself, that He might take them away; laid down His life, that He might take it again; died, the just for the unjust; He saves men from their sins. He fulfilled the law and the prophets. The highest Christian virtue is not practised for the extinction of desire, but because pardon through faith in Christ's blood has been received. Christian holiness is the purification of the most essential characteristics of human nature. The end set before the Christian is the hope of beholding Christ's glory, and being with Him and like Him for ever. The peace of the Christian is not the obliteration but the satisfaction of desire, and the result of reconciliation with God through Christ. The Christian desires that Christ may be magnified in his body whether by life or death.

The history of Buddhism is sketched, and the resemblances to the history of Christianity are shown to be in the laws that regulate all human society.

Buddhism knows no being as the First Cause of all things, as the basis of moral obligation, or Ruler of the universe.

The doctrine of Buddhism concerning the ground of the universe is agnostic, if not positively atheistic.

Law, according to Buddhism, is impersonal. It has no conception of pardon, redemption, or sacrifice, and is an exceeding bitter cry for what Christianity has to offer, viz. : an antidote for sin, reconciliation with God, hope in death, and union with God through Christ. Reason for hoping that when Christ is made known to it, Buddhism will call Him Lord of all.

BUDDHISM



BUDDHISM in its origin was a philosophical method rather than a religious faith.

Buddhism
a philo-
sophical
system
rather than
a religious
faith.

Many experiments have been made by mighty thinkers to solve the mystery of human life. This was one of them. The principles of Gautama the Buddha, an Indian sage, were not absolutely new, nor were his methods unknown, when he essayed his memorable task. His immense personality, assisted by current tendencies at work in Hindû society, enabled him to originate a society, which has in its main features, during more than two thousand years, dominated large portions of the continent of Asia.

The ideas and institutions which date from the initiatory of Gautama exercise a potent spell in their most antique form over Ceylon, British and Native Burmah, Siam, Anam, and (in the form of Jainism) over parts of North Western India. With large modification Buddhism has prevailed over eighteen provinces of China, where it is held in combination with Confucianism and Taoism. Buddhism has exerted much influence in Japan,

The wide
influence of
Buddhism.

In Japan.

where it has suffered the embrace of the aboriginal nature-worship. It has been corrupted in some outlying tribes by devil-worship, and the rites of Siva. In Tibet it has developed into a complicated hierarchy, and has culminated in a patriarchal and pontifical régime. Here Buddhism is the State religion, and has created an organization and diffused ideas which have powerfully affected Mongolia, Mantchuria, and other states tributary to China.

In Tibet. In Nepal at one time a most impressive development of the Buddhistic faith prevailed, and one which was theoretically based on Monotheistic ideas. Though Buddhism took its origin in the Aryan, its greatest triumphs have been won over the Turanian races, and it has been compared to a vast parasitical growth, which has fed on the life and covered the institutions of various types of civilization. Its propaganda is not at an end. At the present hour it is said to be increasing in Tartary, it sends its missionaries to Australia and California, has made a vigorous attempt to cooperate with Western Pessimism, and professes to formulate a true philosophy of history.

In Nepal. Its present increase in Tartary.

Buddha and
Buddha-
dom.

BUDDHA may be discriminated from the historical and practical issues of his thought, as CHRIST is discriminated from CHRISTENDOM.

If by "Buddhism" be meant the ideas and discipline of the earliest followers of Gautama, irrespective of their subsequent development, our

theme is a literary and exegetic one, and turns upon the relative value of Pâli, Sanscrit, Tibetan, and Chinese books. On the other hand, if "Buddhism" be regarded as synonymous with what may be called "Buddha-dom," it must be held to embrace the geographical and historic features of a whole cluster of religious institutions, which have mastered, for more than a thousand years, a fourth part of the human race. Seeing that the Northern Buddhists outnumber the older and more orthodox followers fifteen times over, we cannot exclude their peculiarities from our estimate of what Buddhism is, and its relation to both Christ and Christendom.

A whole cluster of religious institutions embraced in Buddha-dom.

The comparison between Christianity and Buddhism embraces a comparison in both senses.

The *resemblances* between Buddha-dom and Christendom are imposing but superficial, they spring from the common material with which both systems have had to deal, and from the similar conditions under which they have laboured even for opposite ends.

The resemblances between Buddha-dom and Christendom superficial.

The *divergencies* and opposition, and utter dissimilarity between Buddhism and Christianity belong to their inmost essence and aim.

The purport of the present Tract is to illustrate this twofold representation by enumerating the details of this argument. In doing so, the reader will be reminded of the principal facts with reference to Buddha and his religion.

The divergencies and dissimilarity essential.

We propose to enumerate

I. *The impressive external resemblances between Buddhodom and Christendom, calling attention in these very respects to the contrasts which accompany them.*

II. *The fundamental divergencies and antitheses between Buddhism and Christianity.*

I.

The geographical origin of the two religions.

1. THE HOLY LANDS.—These two religions resemble one another in having taken their origin in a limited geographical region, identified with the actions and career of their Founders, which after the lapse of time ceased to be the centres of the faith, but acquired a factitious importance and inspired a sentimental and superstitious reverence.

The lands of the Bible.

Sinai and Palestine still contain the sites where the highest manifestations of the living God have been made to men. The lands of the Bible have attracted pilgrims from the ends of the earth, who have there sought to deepen their faith, increase their knowledge, and satisfy their yearning after a closer intimacy with the facts of our redemption.

Christian ideas and principles arose by God's grace in human hearts and lives.

However spiritual the form of our Christianity may be, we cannot ignore the fact that its noblest ideas and principles arose by God's grace in human minds and lives, and that its most stupendous facts were enacted on this planet, by men and women

who trod the soil of this solid earth. Christianity is not based on a mere speculation, a transcendental dream thought out in the spirit-world, and independent of place and time and circumstance. It rests on a notable series of historic facts, and is associated with certain events which occurred at discoverable dates in the drama of human life, and therefore scientific criticism as well as pious pilgrimage still gathers with zest and unabated interest around Sinai and Bethlehem, Calvary, and Olivet.

Christianity based on historic facts, hence the interest of the historic places.

Now Buddhism took its chief departure in the bosom of a Hindû Sage, whose ideas led him to certain very memorable acts of renunciation, to sore conflict, and life-long teaching. His birth and death, his parentage and consecration, with numerous events in his career, are associated with certain ascertainable sites. These have sustained through even a longer period than the holy places of Palestine have done, the reverence and affection of devout Buddhists. Between the outlying mountains of the Himalayan range and the Ganges, between long. E. 75° and 85°, watered by numerous rivers, and diversified with numerous centres of Hindû life; between Sravasti (*Sahet Mahet*) in N.W., Raja-Griha (*Raj-gir*), and Gaya and Pataliputra (*Patna*) in E. and S.E., will be found Kapilavastu, the birthplace of Gautama, and Kusinagara, the place where he died, and also

Buddhism originated in the bosom of a Hindu Sage whose birth, &c. are associated with certain sites

Places of Gautama's birth and death.

numerous other consecrated spots where the cremated ashes of his body rest. Here also are various scenes dear to the Buddhist legend, and for many ages visited by pilgrims from China and Mongolia, from Kashmir and Khotan, from Ceylon and Burmah. They were sacred places when Buddhism was still a dominant faith in N.W. India, and they were treated with even deeper reverence when the faith had perished on its earliest geographic site. Some of the most interesting Buddhistic literature which is still extant describes the eagerness and enthusiasm displayed by the pious devotees who, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries of our era, encountered incredible obstacles in their resolve to visit these sacred shrines, to obtain books, relics and images of the faith which was dear to them.

The superficial resemblances arise from the human interest attaching to spots where great things have been said or done.

This superficial resemblance to the outward career of a religion profoundly dissimilar in its essence, arises from the purely human interest that evermore attaches to the place where great things have been said and done. The parallel is not confined to the external features of Buddhism and Christianity. It runs through the history of other faiths which have travelled from their geographical origin to distant lands, and which yet have attracted undying affection to the cradle of their infancy.

2. The superficial resemblances between the FOUNDERS of Buddhism and Christianity.

The latest researches make it doubtful whether

Gautama, the son of Suddhodana, was the heir of a *royal* estate or dominion, as Jesus was, but the legend undoubtedly confers on his father and on the Sakyas this distinction, coupling it with august accessories, boundless wealth, and far-extending influence. Reverence for him, and an idea of his spotless purity of heart and life, assumed in the latest legend an introduction into the world by a supernatural process, which, from the first, singled out this great sage and recluse for the highest possible vocation. If he should become a king he was at once prophesied of as about to become the ruler over all lands and worlds; and if he should appear as a sage, he would be the long-expected *Buddha*, "the man perfectly enlightened," who would achieve the highest victories over the evils of humanity, and lead the human race towards the realization of its highest goal.

Hereditary rank of Gautama.

Supposed supernatural birth.

His destiny and mission.

There is no reason to question the *name* of the father of Gautama, the name of his wife—the saintly *Maya*, who died seven days after the birth of her child—or of the city (*Kapila-vastu*), where this extraordinary child first saw the light, in the sixth century B.C. The legends of China, Ceylon, and Nepal tell us that as soon as he was born he declared that this was his last birth, and that he was the greatest of all beings. Such supposed language indicates the reverence felt for his unique career in after years; so also does the pathetic

Legends concerning his birth.

incident, that after this precocious babe had placed his feet upon the head of one of the greatest sages, this wise man declared that Gautama would prove to be the Buddha, but he wept that he should not himself live to see the wondrous effect of his teaching and life.

Names
given to
him in
later times.

The names given in later times to him are very numerous. Sākya-muni, "the Sākya sage;" Bhagava, "the blessed one;" Tathagata, "the excellent one;" Loka-nartha, "the Lord of the world;" Dharma-raja, "the king of the law," or "of righteousness." These are poetic expressions denoting the range and depth of his subsequent influence. The natural desire of the father of Gautama that his son should be prepared for the office and dignities of a prince was strangely thwarted by the bent of the youthful prince towards philosophy and ascetic habit. He was married to the daughter of a king, and surrounded by all the blandishments of an Eastern court, but they all failed to disturb his meditation on the evils and transitory nature of human life.

The natural
bent of
Gautama.

The visions
he saw in
spite of his
father's pre-
cautions to
keep from
him the
facts of
human
sorrow.

The legends narrate the efforts made by his father to conceal from him the facts of human sorrow; but that, in spite of all precaution, he saw a vision of *old age*, with its wrinkled skin and tottering gait; another time, a victim of loathsome *disease*, of repulsive and forsaken aspect, and on a third occasion a *dead body* awaiting cremation.

After each vision he returned to his palace broken-hearted and despairing. It is said that on a fourth expedition, surrounded by all the pomp of the court, he saw the form of a rigid *ascetic*, who seemed to him to promise the only method of escape from the evils of life by extinction of ambition and concupiscence. The legends describe his marvellous skill in all athletic sports, and his superiority to all competitors in mental and physical powers; but nothing availed to prevent what has been called his "*Great Renunciation*," when, with a solitary attendant, he broke away from his home, wife, and only child, looked with loathing on the faded beauty of his singing women, as they lay in sleep around the courts of his harem, exchanged his dress with that of a mendicant, sent his attendant back with a message to his home, and commenced his memorable career of self-mortification, intent upon discovering the truth of human life. The intense picturesqueness of the main facts has been overlaid with a thousand ornamental additions to the story, which were calculated to augment the force of the "renunciation," and throw the spirit of it back into previous lives that he is supposed to have lived, in each of which he performed similar acts of abnegation and devotion to the highest interests of the living beings with whom he came into contact.¹

His physical
and mental
superiority.

His great
renunci-
ation

¹ Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, pp. 98-359. Dr. R. Davids, *Jataka Stories*, Sacred Books of the East.

Doubtless there is some analogy between these stories, and the record of the introduction into the world of the Son of God, the song of angels, the prophecy of Simeon, and the solitary incident of the youth of Jesus as preserved in the canonical Gospels. But the essential distinction between them lies in this, that our Lord followed the lot of ordinary men, ate with publicans and sinners, notwithstanding his prophetic mission, pursued the quiet trade of his father Joseph, proclaimed war against sin, rather than against suffering, and far from accepting the transitory nature of earthly pleasure as a curse, poured new light on life and death. The fundamental principle of Buddha treated existence as a curse which must be evaded; the fundamental principle of Christ's "great renunciation" of honours and glory unutterable, involved the sublime fact that life was the synonym of blessedness, and that *that* blessedness might be eternal. He did not turn away from the agonies of human life. He treated them as abnormal, not inevitable. He took them upon Himself. He healed disease. He cleansed the leper. He raised the dead. He confidently affirmed, "Whoso liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Contrast to the life of our Lord.

The fundamental principles of Buddha and Christ essentially divergent.

The temptation of Gautama.

A superficial resemblance to the career of our Divine Lord was an early temptation of Gautama to relinquish the sublime purpose on which he had entered. MARA, the spirit of evil, and an imper-

sonation of the idea of death, assailed him with thoughts which were to turn him aside from his beneficent career. Legend has amplified these in the later chronicles with the astounding efflorescence of Oriental imagination. He was approached by seductive hallucinations, and when wanton beauty failed, *Mara* put forth the thunders of his wrath, and hurled a hundred thousand burning mountains (!) at him, but they fell in garlands of flowers at his feet. He overcame all the threats, and seductions, and illusions of the spirit of evil, and continued his self-sacrifice.

Legendary amplifications of the story.

His victory over it.

This great event in Buddha's life, in which he won the victory over all evil suggestion, was accompanied, according to the legend, with physical convulsions of nature. The sun was turned into darkness, the stars fell from heaven, "headless spirits filled the air."

Accompanying physical portents.

This conflict, in which the moral greatness of Gautama appeared triumphant, was connected with an effort on his part to gather from the known Brahman teachers who preceded him, all such light as they could give him as to the cause and termination of human sorrow. Their methods and their reasonings dissatisfied him. He also made trial of the most complete ascetic rule, and practised abstention from food and extreme mortification of the flesh. He is said to have spent six years in these exercises, to have secured

His conflict connected with his inquiries as to the cause and termination of human sorrow.

His failure to solve the great problem, and the abandonment of his bodily mortification.

Abandoned by his disciples he betakes himself to the Bô-tree.

There learns the thought that perfect peace is attained by inward culture

Shadowy resemblances to the temptation and victory of Christ.

thereby the greatest reputation as a lonely hermit, and to have drawn around him admirers and imitators. Wiser than the Stylites of Christian asceticism, Gautama found that he came no nearer to the solution of his great problem, and resolved to alter his course, to take food, to renounce his bodily mortification.

In doing this he alienated his earliest disciples, who fled from him to Benares, leaving him, stung by their lack of appreciation, to encounter with surprising courage new difficulties. It was after his friends left him, that he retired to the shade of a Bô-tree, at Gaya, known ever since as the most sacred spot in Buddhahdom. There he passed through the crisis of his ministry, coming by stern exercise of thought to the idea, that not by outward penances, but by inward culture; not by rites and ceremonies, but by love and gentleness to others; not by spitefully punishing the flesh, but by the cessation of all desire, by the blowing out of the fires of lust and anger and illusion, he would reach a state of mind which would be perfect peace.

This series of struggles and conflicts of the man Gautama bears a shadowy but not a real resemblance to the temptation and the victory of the Lord Christ. In the case of Jesus, absolute loyalty to the Holy Father's will, when He was tempted by the flesh and the devil to secure that very will by

self-gratification, was triumphant over every seduction. The Bô-tree of Buddhism corresponds in vague way with the Cross, "the cursed tree" on which the Saviour died, but it suggests throughout profoundly different ideas. The "sacred tree" of Buddhism is a symbol of the highest point of exaltation which Oriental intelligence and virtue ever reached. The "cursed tree" of Christianity, where Jesus the Just died for the unjust, is a symbol of the most terrible condemnation of human corruption; but the most amazing manifestation of the love, the righteousness, the justice, the wisdom and power of God.

The Buddhist Bô-tree and the Cross of Christ suggest profoundly different ideas.

There is no need to throw a single shadow over the moral excellence of Gautama. He went about preaching and teaching the deliverance that he believed himself to have found from all the evils incident to human life. His methods were those of moral suasion. He adopted no arm of power to enforce submission to his method or secret. The parabolic style of instruction gave vivacity to his discourse. He called upon men to pursue the middle path between the pleasures of sense, and the mortifications of the ascetic schools.

Gautama's teaching and methods.

"Sorrow" was with him the direct consequence of the sense of individuality, and consciousness of desire thwarted or ungratified. Cessation of sorrow was only to be secured by freedom from all these causes of sorrow, all the cravings which prolong

His view of sorrow and how to procure its cessation

The Hindu theory of the ego accepted and utilised by him.

the illusion of one's separate interests or individual being. He approximated to the Hindu theory, which makes consciousness of the Ego an illusion, and all the facts of human life and mundane existence as waves passing over a boundless ocean of being. Accepting this as the deepest truth, Gautama utilized it, as the gospel of deliverance from all the miseries of existence, and endeavoured to bring his followers to his own placid view of the boundless evils of life by the practice of a virtue which aimed at the obliteration of desire. Desire was the radical source of every calamity from birth to death, and after death.

Desire, according to him, the source of every calamity.

The demands of Christ essentially different.

From reasons utterly diverse from these, our Lord demanded inward purity, and holy conduct, simplicity of motive, and detachment from the world. His disciples were to take up the Cross and follow Him, to come to Him, and to rest in Him, to take sides with Him against sin, to believe in Him, as one able to save and to confer eternal life, as One destined to judge all conduct and motive, and all the inward springs of life. He promised to do that for men by His own perfection of being and sacrifice which they could not do for themselves. He saved men from their sins. The highest virtue in the theory of Gautama was pursued and practised with the view of extinguishing all desire whatsoever, and of losing all consciousness of Ego. He taught men to lose

His promises.

His salvation.

self, not in the bosom of the eternal Being, but in the ocean of *non-existence*. The highest virtue in the way revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ, follows as a consequence of our having received a new and nobler Ego, and because our sins have been pardoned through faith in His atoning blood. The highest kind of Christian life involves a quenchless yearning after God Himself, a supreme love to the Father, and to Christ as the revelation of the Father. The Buddha's holiness was the extinction of the most essential characteristics of human nature; the Christ's holiness was the purification and intensification of all those characteristics. The end set before the pious follower of Buddha was to renounce the highest possibilities of man, and descend to the passionless calm of some purely vegetative existence, which contemplated nothing, desired nothing, enjoyed nothing, feared nothing, expected nothing, suffered nothing; but the end set before the humblest follower of Jesus, was to think deeply, to desire the greatest uplifting, to master outward sorrow with a joy unspeakable, to triumph over illusion by reality, to suffer and die with the Christ, in blessed hope of beholding His glory, of being with Him and like Him for ever.

The highest virtue according to Gautama and according to Christ contrasted.

Buddhist and Christian holiness contrasted.

The end of the Buddhist and the end of the Christian.

3. *The relation of both religions to the PAST.*

The Christ cannot be properly understood if no account be taken of the faith and hope of Israel, or of a pre-existent literature of unspeakable value,

The relation of Christ to Israel.

Christ's
relation
to the
scriptures
of the Old
Testament.

Buddha's
relation to
an older
faith.

Oriental
speculation
about "the
sorrow of
the world."

Contending
powers and
forces.

which enshrined both. Christ's claim was founded upon the Old Testament Scriptures. He fulfilled the law and the prophets.

Buddha cannot be understood if it be not remembered that his entire career was coloured by the far-reaching influences of an older faith that he adopted, after he had freed them from some of the exclusive and national forms which they had assumed. As a philosopher he built upon the speculation of the older schools of thought, and as a great teacher he aimed to deliver mankind from the evil which earlier Hindû sages had recognized as appertaining to mundane life.

Long before the days of Gautama, "the sorrow of the world" and of man had pressed on the Oriental mind with terrific force. Speculation, following upon the simpler conceptions of the Vedic age, had led to a discrimination between the Supreme *ATMAN*, the breathing energy or subject of all thought, identified as it was with Brahma, the all-pervading force, the essence of all things, on the one hand, and on the other the plurality of existence and impermanence which was "not Atman," which had issued from his sense of loneliness and unrest. Men saw on all sides of them formless powers, chaotic forces contending with each other and with them. Death put on new and fearful aspects. As an enemy he did not spend his power in the one blow he struck at any

living thing. Unless men had propitiated these powers of destruction, they would be ceaselessly pursued in other worlds by the tyrant death, who would continuously smite down the new life which they would at each death assume. From the first there was commingled with the fear of metempsychosis, the hope and possibility of deliverance from it, but the fear itself produced a boundless, haunting dismay, verging on unutterable despair, which urged on both philosopher and priest to propound their remedies, to indicate the sacrifice, the ritual, the abstinence, the ascetic method by which this fearful entail of suffering might be cut off. To an Oriental it was supreme good if only he could be sure that he would sink at death once and for ever into the ocean of Being, and not be constrained by overwhelming fate to itinerate again and again the melancholy cycle of birth, disappointment, and death. He would have been content if only it had been appointed for him "once to die."

It was supposed that the only way of deliverance from the domain of death was unity of soul with the true mode of being, with Atman (Brahma). The soul must not dwell in the region of plurality, but must, in shuffling off the body, allow consciousness to be extinguished, and so put on the nature of Brahma himself. "The mode of action" (*Karma*) pursued here on earth was supposed to determine the course which the soul would pursue

The need of propitiating the powers of destruction.

The "supreme good" of the Oriental

The supposed way of deliverance from the domain of death.

Undisturbed sleep the image of the highest felicity.

from one state of being to another. Yet this form of moral retribution was not so much an open secret, as a profound mystery spoken by men of mark to each other. It was complicated by the distaste which the entire philosophy cast on action of any kind, good or evil. The infinite Brahma was above all characteristics, and the highest felicity for man was imaged in the depth of undisturbed sleep, when he loses all desire and all vision, and is beyond the reach of pleasure or pain. Sometimes these ancient teachers emphasized the obliteration of all desire, and at other times the possession of the knowledge that there is no finite self at all. Desire corresponds with ignorance of this highest reality, a knowledge of it corresponds with the extinction of desire.

Gautama found the problem ready to his hand, and carried it further than the Brahminical systems that had gone before.

So far Brahminical systems of thought had gone in the sixth century before Christ, and before Gautama began his meditations. This remarkable teacher found the problem ready to his hand, and pursued it further. He did not create the central ideas which he and his followers repeated with wearisome iteration. He gave a new and weird elevation to man, by removing out of his path and from the range of his contemplations the deities innumerable who were believed by his contemporaries to contribute to emancipation. The gods themselves were stamped for him with the character of impermanence and ignorance and

passion, and man was left alone to fight this tremendous battle with sorrow and death, by an attainment of a knowledge not yet secured by them.

At this point of our review, one of the superficial but startling resemblances in the evolution of Buddhism and Christian faith makes its appearance.

Buddha certainly took up the burning question of the existing schools of thought, and gave them as we shall see a new departure. He waved his hand over the mythologies and gods of the popular faith, and they disappeared into the formless chaos. He met the desires of men after the condition of freedom from the curse of existence, by reducing existence itself to non-existence, and by dispensing with all aid from the popular mythology. The differences between men, which made so startling a barrier between man and woman, between race and race, caste and caste, he theoretically disposed of, by reducing them all to insignificance.

Buddha's
new
departure.

He reduced
the differ-
ences
between
men to in-
significance.

Our Lord Jesus Christ initiated a new departure on ground already hallowed by Revelations of the Infinite One, but He did not effect this change by drawing an impenetrable veil over Jehovah's face, but by revealing the Father, by declaring that He in whom all live and have their being is Impartial Holiness and Eternal Love. He declared that He and the Father were one. He called upon men to believe in the Father as their Father. He assured men that the Lord of heaven and earth

Our Lord's
new
departure
was on
ground
hallowed by
previous
revelations.

He revealed
the Father
and de-
clared His
own unity
with Him.

God reveals
His secrets
to babes.

Self-sur-
render to
God's will
gives a man
to himself.

Christ gave
a new
meaning to
souls.

Buddha
turned
men's eyes
away from
the sorrows
of life;

Christ took
them away
by bearing
them.

The deaths
of Buddha
and Christ.

revealed the deepest secrets even to babes This was a truth that Buddha with his emphasis on the virtues of knowledge utterly missed. Moral surrender to a perfectly holy and loving will gave a man to himself. Not by under estimating the reality of self, but by conferring upon it an infinite value and significance, did Jesus free those who believed in Him from the greatest burden; not the burden of existence, but the burden of sin. Jesus Christ abolished distinctions, not by emphasizing the unreality of souls, but by investing all souls with a new meaning, which in itself was more to be desired than all the temporary and vanishing shadows of earthly greatness. Buddha turned men's eyes away from the sorrows of life. He would have men think them out of existence by a species of intellectual training. Christ took all our sorrows and sickness and death upon Himself, that He might take them away; and He pronounced His benediction on the poverty, the mourning, the hunger, the sorrow, the death, which are the handmaids to the soul, in its passage into the perfect life.

4. A further superficial resemblance between the Buddha and the Christ, is the prominence given in either system to the DEATH of the Founders. Throughout Buddhodom the death (commonly¹

¹ Dr. Rhys Davids. Doctrine of Nirvâna, *Buddhism*, pp. 110-123; and Hibbert Lectures, Lecture III.

though perhaps wrongly regarded as the *Nirvāna*) of Gautama is taken as the starting-point of the new faith. He had been the living Head of his disciples to whom all difficulties were referred, by whom the faithful were exhorted and directed in the smallest matters affecting their daily conduct or their mutual government, their dress, food, gesture, and minutest habit. His departure by death would naturally leave an awful blank. His death when it came was as sublime as that of Socrates, and through the various legends and amplifications of the narrative we can discern some of its real features. At a great age, having spent some fifty years in constant preaching and teaching, his mental faculties undimmed, he reached a grove outside *Kusinagāra*, and rested for the last time.

The death of Gautama the starting point of the Buddhist faith.

The sublimity of his death.

At the river, feeling that he was dying, he received food from his disciples, and promised them great reward in a future life for this act of piety. He spoke of his burial, and rules to be followed by his order. *Ananda* wept as he saw the end drawing near, and Gautama said,—

“O! *Ananda*, do not let yourself be troubled, do not weep. Have I not told you that we must part from all we hold most dear and pleasant? No being however born or put together can overcome the dissolution inherent in it; no such condition can exist. For a long time, *Ananda*, you have been very near to me by kindness in act and word and thoughtfulness. You have always done well; persevere, and you shall be quite free from the thirst of life, this chain of ignorance.” Afterwards he said, “You may perhaps be given to think ‘the word is ended now

His last words.

our Teacher is gone,' but you must not think so. After I am dead let the Law and the rules of the Order be a Teacher to you." "Mendicants, I now impress it upon you, the parts and powers of man must be dissolved; work out your own salvation with diligence."

His mental
state as he
passed
away.

These were the last words spoken by Gautama Buddha. Studiously and stedfastly refusing to answer the question as to any personal continuity of his own being after death, and in a mental state of utter self-negation rather than of reconciliation with any power, or fate, or Being above him or beyond him, he passed away. He lived and died a Hindû, saturated with Hindû philosophy and ethic, yet giving to both a more practical form than they had already received. The company of his disciples never dreamed even of his resurrection in any form, material or etherial. So entirely had he realized his own ideal of knowledge, and the quenching of the thirst for life, that he believed that he was henceforth exempt from the curse of any further itineration of the cycle of birth and death. There were no elements of character (*Karma*) to be gathered once more into the form of man or *deva* or *nat* (angel). He had absolutely vanished. His body was burned on the funeral pile, and his ashes were distributed (according to the legend) among his celebrated followers of high rank. Topes, or mausolea were erected over them. The mendicant order he founded took fresh lease of life, and dating from his august departure, it took

No thought
of his
resurrection
ever
occurred
to his
disciples.

the form which has to some extent been observed to the present day.

His death was a notable event in the history of Buddhism, as the hour when a complete and final dissolution of the personality of Buddha took place. Buddha in death received final manumission from the servitude and cycle of change, the repetition of birth and death. Such repetition is the primal curse of all existent beings, but was evaded in his case by the cessation of every desire, and his perfect knowledge of the causes of suffering, and the way to escape from them. He is NOT, in any sense in which the idea of existence can be predicated by western mind. This is his crown of supreme glory. The moment when his knowledge obtained this lofty fruition of its interminable strife, was that from which Buddhahood originates. The method was revealed, the example given, the triumph secured. His objective death was the starting-point of a subjective immortality in the hearts of his followers. The absolute completeness of his death was, therefore, a reason for the highest satisfaction of his followers; and the aspect it assumes in the legends of many nations invests it with consummate interest.

His death the complete and final dissolution of Buddha's personality.

His objective death the starting point of a subjective immortality in the hearts of his followers.

The legends of China and Tibet expand and adorn the story of the death and cremation of Buddha, and help to show how entirely superficial is the resemblance between the deaths of Buddha

The death of the Son of God the re-commencement of His life in a position of supreme influence and power.

His death voluntary and sacrificial.

The perpetuity of His power and the continuity of His life manifested by His resurrection.

and of Christ, in their effects upon their respective followers. The death of the Son of God was an event which, by its stupendous importance, had an effect upon the whole universe, not by the cessation of His life and the close of His personality, but by the recommencement of that life in a position of supreme influence and actual power over heaven and earth. He proceeded to fill and rule all things. He not only vanquished death for Himself by voluntarily submitting to it, with accompaniments of inconceivable terror, though there was no inherent necessity for it, but He took away, by bearing it, the sting of death, which is sin, for all who appreciate and acquiesce in His redeeming love. His death did not proceed from the impermanence of the corporeity He bore, but was for the sins of the race whose nature He had voluntarily assumed. The perpetuity of His spiritual power and the continuity of His life was made manifest to men by the fact of His resurrection, and a new revelation was thus given to man of the nature of the spiritual body and of the eternal life.

Buddha persisted unto death in his belief that the final dissolution of his body closed for ever the career of individuality for himself, and opened up the way in which his followers might reach a similar consummation. Christ laid down His life that He might take it again, and convinced man-

kind that death was not the end, but rather the beginning of an endless life, not only for Himself but for all who love His appearing. So that though there are many superficial resemblances in the bearing of the death of Christ and that of Buddha upon their respective followers, these apparent resemblances are illusory in the extreme.

Christ's death the beginning of an endless life for all who love His appearing.

5. Another resemblance between the two systems is that both profess to rest upon a supreme law of life, which affects the entire universe. The DHARMA (or Dhamma) which is "the law" of Buddha occupies a place of high importance. Next to his own great personality in the esteem of his followers, is the "word" that he uttered for their guidance.

The "law" of Buddha.

To proclaim the discovery made by the sage, "to turn the wheel of the law," to insist upon "the four noble truths," and to press the moral injunctions involved in them, is the chief function of the disciples of Buddha. These "truths" do not simply affect human and contemporary life, but all life in all worlds, and in all the forms of existence, human and divine, angelic and animal, past, present, and future. They are not in themselves a cosmology or psychology, they involve no theory of the origin or end of things, or any philosophy of soul, as distinct from body, or any theological deliverance; and yet they lay the foundation for speculation on all these subjects, which the followers of Buddha are not slow to utilize.

"The four noble truths" affect life in all worlds.

Perhaps the simplest form in which the more central teaching of Gautama can be presented, is preserved in the sermon preached by him at Benares, after he had received the great illumination under the *Bô-tree* and was recognized as *Buddha*.

THE FIRST TRUTH.

The sacred truth of suffering.

“This, oh monks, is the sacred truth of suffering : Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unloved is suffering, to be separated from the loved is suffering, not to obtain what one desires is suffering, the fivefold clinging to the earthly [*i.e.*, hankering after corporeal form, sensations, perceptions, conformations, and also after consciousness itself] is suffering.”

Impermanence the inexhaustible source of suffering.

The prevalence, the universal presence of thwarted desires, the fact of pain, the fact that wherever there are the conditions of self-consciousness in this or other worlds, there is pain—this is the “first truth.” Impermanence by itself is the inexhaustible source of suffering, and it is the indispensable condition of all that is. No thinker ever came to such an irrevocable judgment on the misery of existence in all worlds. The youth with his visions of bliss, the gorgeous insect fluttering in the sunbeam, the deva drinking his chalice of joy, the king on his throne, are all cherishing infinite delusion, if they do not see the near approach of suffering. Behind the sorrowful present lies a measureless sorrowful past, and an equally immeasurable future full of sorrows for him who does not put an end to sorrow.

The following most pathetic passage is quoted by Oldenberg from *Samyuttaka Nikaya*:

“The pilgrimage of beings has its beginning in eternity. No opening can be discovered from which proceeding creatures mazed in ignorance, fettered by a *thirst for being*, can stray and wander. What think ye, my disciples, whether is more—the water that is in the four great oceans, or the tears which have flowed from you while ye strayed and wandered on this long pilgrimage, and sorrowed and wept because that was your portion which ye abhorred, and that which ye loved was not your portion!”

The so-called gods are all bound by the chain of desire, and so are brought under the power of *Māra*.

“Man gathers flowers, his heart is set on pleasure, Death comes upon him like the floods of water on a village and sweeps him away.”

This perception of the poignant sorrow of the universe pervades Buddhist literature from end to end; not, however, in the sense of being reconciled or resigned to such fate, nor exactly in the spirit wherewith great Christian moralists have bewailed the misery of man, but rather in the tone of lofty pity for those who have not made the discovery.

The tone of Buddhist literature respecting the sorrow of the universe.

THE SECOND SACRED OR NOBLE TRUTH is *that of the origin of suffering*, and this Buddha has declared to be

The origin of suffering.

“the thirst (for being) which leads from birth to birth, together with lust and desire, which find gratification here and there, the thirst for pleasure and the thirst for power.”

THE THIRD SACRED TRUTH is that of

“the *extinction of suffering*; the extinction of this thirst by complete annihilation of desire, letting it go, expelling it, separating oneself from it, giving it no room.”

The extinction of suffering

The connection between the two truths.

Consciousness and corporeal form conditions of each other's activity.

The six fields.

Contact.

Sensation.

Thirst.

The connection between these two "truths" is difficult to seize, but is thus explained. Buddha himself named two links as preceding consciousness itself, but they are not easy to understand. Taking, however, bare consciousness of any individual as a starting-point he regarded corporeal form and name as an inevitable consequence of it, and he also laid it down that consciousness and corporeal form were reciprocal to each other,—mutual conditions of one another's activity. They lean upon one another, as two bundles of sticks mutually support each other. The death of one corporeal being sets the consciousness element free for the formation of another. The next links are as follows: from the *consciousness* and *corporeal form* come the six fields (*i.e.*, the five senses and the understanding), with their corresponding objects. From the six fields comes "*contact*," and from contact comes "*sensation*," [and in a strange way the old sage endeavoured to account for what we term "perception" and "conception;" but let this pass]—"from *sensation* arises *thirst*." It is this thirst and longing for sensation that leads to rebirth, the most fruitful cause of suffering, for from "thirst" comes "clinging." As flame clings to fuel, which can never be extinguished until the fuel is consumed, so the flame of our consciousness presses on from life to life, by transmigration, from earth to hell, from hells to heavens. The slightest clinging prevents deliver-

ance, and only by utter cessation of clinging is the soul delivered from sinful and suffering existence.

The question arises, Whence comes *consciousness*? It proceeds from KARMA (*Kamma Pali*), the moral retribution of the entire action of a man's past state. His ignorance in a previous birth of the consequences of his thirst and clinging, produces the conditions under which consciousness takes new name and (fresh) corporeal form in this present state of his being. This *Karma* forces, or forms, or reconstitutes being in the five regions of transmigration. It does not follow that men reappear as men, they may become animals, goblins, devas, gods. The glories of the heaven-life into which some men's karma causes a new individuality to enter, are dazzling or satisfying. Dread and ghastly is the agony of the hells into which the karma of others causes other individualities to appear. It would seem as if the thirst for rebirth in some particular form of being had also (on Buddhistic theory) to do with the result; but it may and must happen that by securing any form of new birth, the soul is still chained and fettered by the miserable cycle that it has to itinerate. The extinction of the thirst which leads to the propagation and perpetuation of life, the annihilation of the clinging, is the only way of obtaining deliverance from the misery of existence.

The source of consciousness.

The re-constitution of being by Karma in the five regions of transformation.

The extinction of thirst the only way of obtaining deliverance from the misery of existence.

THE FOURTH SACRED TRUTH teaches the *path*

The path
to the
extinction
of suffering.

to the extinction of suffering, the method by which Buddhistic teachers have expanded the fundamental ideas of their founder. The path includes :—

- (1) Right belief (views).
- (2) Right feelings (or resolves).
- (3) Right actions.
- (4) Right living (or mode of livelihood).
- (5) Right exertion (or endeavour).
- (6) Right thought (or memory).
- (7) Right meditation (or self-concentration).

These paths, blending into one, are continually illustrated by parable, dialogue, fable, apologue, and by the numberless stories of Buddha, not only while passing through the final stage of his existence, but in hundreds of previous existences, during which his Karma was dwindling, and the necessity of a further rebirth gradually becoming annihilated.

Five pro-
hibitions.

This code is moreover re-shaped for practical use in the form of FIVE PROHIBITIONS : (1) to kill no living thing ; (2) to lay no hand on the property of another ; (3) not to touch another's wife ; (4) not to speak what is untrue ; (5) not to drink intoxicants. These prohibitions, four of which closely correspond with the law of the second table of the decalogue, are interpreted to mean far more than the bare restraint from some definite action. The first leads to most careful avoidance of any known sacrifice of life, and is probably based upon

The
significance
of the pro-
hibitions.

the increment of suffering involved in the origination of a new life, not on the sanctity of life itself. As far as human life is concerned, it is made to cover much that was expressed in our Lord's interpretation of the sixth commandment. The second injunction corresponds with the seventh commandment, and as far as monks are concerned prohibits all sexual intercourse whatever. The strongest emphasis is laid upon the spirit of forgiveness and abstinence from enmity and calumnious conversation, on extinction of impure thought and desire, and on meekness in receiving cruel wrong.

The spirit of forgiveness, etc., emphasised.

It must be carefully noted that the duties of the moral code are confined entirely to those of the second table; and that there are no hints of the principle of love to others, save as the expression of the desire to surmount and extinguish all desire, including desire for the welfare of others. There is no room in this method of deliverance for the little child or the guilty sinner; nor is there the faintest hint of help from any higher source than self to enable the strongest spirit to attain even the mysterious rest which is set forth as the highest hope of mankind.

No hints of the principle of love to others.

No hint of help from any higher source.

The moral precepts which are embodied in Buddhism simply correspond with those which are found in the earliest teaching of Hinduism, and of the Egyptian, Chinese, and Parsi moralists, and must not claim to be the special patrimony

The moral precepts not the special patrimony of Buddha

They are anterior to special revelation in the Scriptures, accompanied with principles and motives and connected with powers which lift men into harmony with them.

of Buddha. They are older and deeper than any civilization, and anterior to all special revelation, written or unwritten. They are enshrined in the decalogue, and in the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ; but in both these revelations they are accompanied with principles and motives, and associated with powers which lift man into harmony with them.

It is not by any means clear how the thirst of the soul can be annihilated by these paths of moral obedience, or by any recognition of the universality of suffering.

The contrast between the Gospel of Christ's salvation and the law of Buddha's deliverance is so great that words cannot measure it. The moral culture which schools the mind into utter passivity and indifference to all things and persons is the very antipodes of the spiritual culture which loves and blesses all the works of God, which embraces all souls, and is reconciled to the Supreme Will.

The moral culture of Buddhism the very antipodes of the spiritual culture of Christianity.

Misery, not sin, the evil to be explained by Karma.

Misery, rather than sin, is the evil supposed to be explained by the theory of KARMA. Moral suicide, not of the bodily life, but of the very possibility of reconstruction, and consequent deliverance from the misery of existence is the great achievement of the Buddhist *régime*.

It is obvious that the terrible evil of transmigration, which was accepted by the Oriental mind as beyond the range of scepticism or question,

was a very real and haunting terror. Although the idea of conscious continuity of being after death, or any remembrance of a previous existence, was ignored, if not categorically denied by Buddha, and although the Brahminical conception of ultimate absorption and loss of personality in the Supreme Self, in Brahma, ceased to influence his mind or affect his disciples, yet he could not divest himself or them of the fact of transmigration. So he sought to reconcile the two notions, the old ancestral creed with his idea of deliverance; and he did so, by supposing that every form of evil in this and other worlds, in heaven and hell, is the outcome or karma of the life lived previously by some unenlightened being who had not pursued the paths of deliverance. There were four of these paths or stages of the path which were enumerated.

Transmigration a haunting terror.

Buddha's reconciliation of the ancestral creed with his idea of deliverance.

(1) *Conversion*, or entering on the stream in which a man becomes free from the delusion of self, from doubt as to Buddha himself, from confidence in mere rite and ceremony. Even this first stage is better than universal empire, better than the prolongation of conscious life in heaven.

Beginning of freedom from the delusion of self.

(2) *The path of those who will only return to the world once more* is secured by those who have reduced to a minimum lust, hatred, and delusion. Even if there be this minimum of clinging to the sources of all misery,—one new life here will await them.

The path of those who reduce lust, hatred, and delusion to a minimum, who will only return to the world once more.

The path of those in whom all self seeking and wrong feeling are extinguished.

(3) *The path of those who will never return to this world* is one in which all desire for self or wrong feeling for others is extinguished, and at death their *karma* may produce some being in some of the upper worlds.

The path of the veritable saint.

(4) *The final path of the veritable saint*, or ARHAT, is that which has lost even the faintest clinging to existence, or feeblest desire for it, in this or other worlds, and absolute freedom from all pride, self-righteousness, and ignorance.

Nirvana or the absolute peace and rest of the ARHAT.

This condition of mind and state of will into which a man is brought by these saintly processes is, according to Oldenberg, Rhys Davids, and others, NIRVANA. In defining the term, they maintain that it is *not* the condition into which God or man is brought after dissolution; it is not the synonym for "heaven;" it is not the equivalent for annihilation; but it is the term which denotes the absolute peace and rest of the ARHAT, *before* the mystery of the grave is faced. Numerous passages are quoted from the Suttas, in which *Nirvāna* is promised to the devotee who has conquered sin by holiness, who has become utterly free from desire, and so it is set forth as the *extinction of the sinful grasping condition of mind and heart which would otherwise be the cause of another individual existence*. It is a blowing out of the fires of lust, anger, ignorance, and selfishness. It is the *perfect peace*. When an Arhat has reached this exalted state before

death, he still retains the *Skandhas* as they are called, the bodily functions and powers, the issue of the sins of his previous existences in other individualities. When death supervenes, these skandhas—being transitory—pass away, and there is no more construction of an individuality in this or any other world. The “Karma” of untold lives is dissolved.

The Arhat who has perfect peace before death still retains the bodily functions and powers.

It is probable that the idea expressed by the term *Skandha* (the bodily functions and attributes and consequent powers) included that in which these inhered, the “form” at least which has held them together, and which remains even after they are scattered in the funeral pyre.

What the term *Skandha*, (bodily functions and powers) includes.

The later books gave the name of *Boddhisattwa*, to those Arhats who had only one more life to live in this world. The heaven to which *Maya*, the mother of Buddha, had gone at death, was one to which it was believed by supernatural trance Buddha had ascended, and where he held communion with her.

The *Boddhisattwa*.

The heaven of *Maya* whither Buddha went.

Such a conception seems to allow that there was a continuity of existence and consciousness possible to Buddhist saints, believed in even within the orthodox communion, and among austere sects of the ancient faith. The Rev. Spence Hardy and Mgr. Bigandet strongly maintain the utter nihilism of the *Nirvâna* of Buddha himself. Burnouf and others confirm the same view, though they suggest that *Gautama*

Continuity of existence and consciousness regarded as possible to Buddhist saints.

The spread of the formula of annihilation.

is the last mighty spirit that has reached this *summum bonum*. It seems incredible to us that a formula of utter annihilation could ever have made the extraordinary progress that it did among peoples who at least believed in an absorption into the supreme self and eternal essence, and a transmigration which did not repudiate the idea of soul. Dr. Rhys Davids seems to think that the passion of universal benevolence involved in the closing up of one only of the hitherto endless sources of misery was sufficient motive for entering on the path to Nirvâna, even though the Buddhist disciple should hereafter be unconscious of the advantage he had conferred upon the universe by his non-existence.

Dr. Rhys Davids' explanation.

Buddha's dogmatism and agnosticism.

The safest method of understanding the problem, is to separate the question of Nirvâna from that of the continuity of the soul. Buddha was a supreme dogmatist on the nature of true peace, and an extreme Agnostic as to the future life. He would suffer no disciple to deviate a hair-breadth from the path to Nirvâna, but he repudiated all logical inferences drawn from the essential nature of Nirvâna. No wonder that the idea of Nirvâna did in after days develop into the conception of Paradise, whether this latter was due to Christian influences or not.

The peace of the Buddhist and the peace of the Christian

There is a superficial resemblance between the sacred peace of the Buddhist saint and that of the sanctified follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, who

has lost his own will in the will of God. But the Christian believer is never so conscious of and aware of his own existence as when he loses it in Christ's. Faith at its best is union with Christ, but it is the union of a member with a body. The "I" and "thou" are not abolished relations. Perfect love casts out fear, but the distinction between the object and subject of a supreme affection will endure for ever. "Eternal life," by the very form and inner meaning of the idea, is the logical contradictory of Nirvâna.

The Christian united to Christ as a member to a body.

Eternal life the logical contradictory of Nirvana

Buddhist peace is the obliteration of desire; Christian peace the refinement and satisfaction of desire. The Buddhist saint conquers all his longings and regrets; the Christian exclaims, "My earnest expectation and desire are that Christ may be magnified in my body whether by life or death." The peace of the Christian flows from, and is the result of, reconciliation and acceptance with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The source of the peace of the Christian.

6. There is a striking external resemblance between the Society (Church) founded by our Lord, and the Society (*Sangha*) originated by Gautama Buddha. These resemblances are most of all conspicuous in the complicated hierarchy of the Papal Church, and a multitude of religious orders pledged to a more or less rigid loyalty to its principles and precepts.

Points of similarity between the society of Buddha and the Church.

The history of the "Society" or "Order," or "Assembly" of Buddha, offers a bewildering similarity to some of the aspects of Christendom; so that writers customarily speak of the "Church," the "Councils," the "Canons," "the Sacred Books," the "Priesthood," the "Monasteries," the "Monks and Nuns," the "Pilgrims" the "Patriarchs" and "Pontiffs," the "Missioners," the "Heretical sects," the "Cathedrals," of Buddhodom. Rosaries are used by the monks and nuns to assist them to recite their meditations and praises. Incense is offered to sacred images of the greatest Buddha, as well as to some of the anticipated Buddhas of the future. A kind of divinity is honoured, consisting of "the three precious ones"—the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, *i.e.*, I. The Buddha. II. His law or word. III. The society which embodies his principles and spirit.

The resemblances conceal the radical divergence of principle between the two.

These and many other details of external resemblance to Christian institutions conceal the radical divergence between their respective principles. The resemblances are not in the fundamental elements of thought or feeling, but in the laws which regulate all human society, and are evolved more or less wherever ideas form the nucleus of association on a great scale. Christianity in her essence cannot be credited with the whole history of the institutions which have been developed by her adherents. The enormous variety

of these institutions finds some parallels in the different development which the Buddhistic "Church" has suffered in the various oriental countries through which these ideas have spread.

Buddhism, moreover, like Christianity, has taken hold in its passage from land to land of ideas that are foreign to its origin, but which have received such vast expansion and exercised so great a hold upon the Oriental mind, that they cannot be ignored in any estimate of this extraordinary form of religious organization.

Ideas foreign to their origin assimilated by both systems.

A brief sketch of this history and of this society must here be attempted.

On the occurrence of Buddha's death his disciples, scattered over many parts of India, according to tradition, assembled to the number of 500 at Rajagriha, and proceeded to regulate, in harmony with what they believed to be their master's word, the principles of faith and order to be hereafter observed by the society, and to make an authentic text of his sayings. They professed only to recite what they had heard from the lips of the exalted one, and they called on all new adherents to "take refuge" in Buddha, in his doctrine, and in his order. At first they were all mendicant monks who were centres of spiritual power in their own neighbourhood, but who perpetually moved from place to place (except during the rainy season). They had not the cohesion

Rules of the Buddhist society formulated at Buddha's death.

Text of his sayings.

Migratory
character
of the
mendicant
disciples of
Buddha.

Differing
rules adop-
ted by
various
synods.

Rapid
increase of
numbers.

Qualifica-
tions of
candidates.

of early Christian churches, which from the Apostolic age attached themselves to particular localities, and thus became the centres of missionary expansion, and the larger units of a new brotherhood. The mendicant disciples of Buddha were continually changing their place of abode, and the small gatherings of them were never the same. Consequently they differed among each other as to the precise rules they were called upon to adopt. One synod of disciples differed from another synod, and the greatest confusion prevailed. Patriarchal authority, to take the place of Gautama's, did not emerge in India, though special deference was probably paid to those who were known to have been the associates and personal friends of the great sage. But the number of those who sought to enter the paths leading to Nirvâna multiplied daily, and the initiation into the society closely corresponded with the rules by which a Brahmin devoted himself to an ascetic life.

Candidates were to protest themselves free from leprosy, goître, consumption, and epilepsy. What a contrast is this to the fellowship which accepted and healed the leper, and cast out the devil! How bitter the confession that there was no deliverance possible for some, and those the most needy of mankind! They had, moreover, to show that they were twenty years of age, were possessed of alms-bowl and garments, and were willing to submit to the

rules. These were (1) that they should feed only on morsels secured by begging; (2) that their clothes should be constructed of rags which they collected; (3) that their bed should be under the trees of the forest; (4) that medicine should be the urine of cattle; (5) that all sexual intercourse should be absolutely suspended; (6) that all theft, even to a blade of grass, should be repudiated; (7) that no life should be taken, not even that of a worm or an ant.

Rules to be submitted to.

These austere rules were binding upon the ordained monk so long as he chose. But a monk might return to the world, if conscious of any long-
ing even for father, wife, or friend, and there would then be an end of his hope of deliverance; but so long as he was called a Bhikkhu, he accepted poverty as absolutely as the disciples of St. Francis did in after days. The monk did not look in vain from the benevolent for food, clothing, or medicine for the sick. The "order" of Buddha did not, like the mediæval monks of the West, cultivate the ground, nor did they accumulate property.

A monk might return to the world.

Negligence in outer appearance and personal defilement were condemned. The rags sewn together for garments were to be washed and dyed; and Buddha did not refuse his mendicants the comfort of wearing robes when freely given them, or receiving food if offered them in the houses of the laity. The austerity

Mitigations of the austerity of the rules.

must consequently in many cases have been softened.

Monasteries. *Viharas* or monasteries were erected by well-wishers, where many conveniences were provided for the "order," especially in the rainy season. Many of the sacred books are occupied with the rules for the ascetic life pressed into the most insignificant detail, and fortified by some narrative or apologue, or solemn advice on the subject supposed to have been uttered by the "exalted one," or by one or other of his most venerable associates.¹

Worship. The "worship" of the Buddhist monks was profoundly different from that which prevails in every other ancient faith. The entire process is one of self-concentration. In the depth of each consciousness the conflict and the victory must take place. Buddha had passed into Nirvâna, and at all events into absolute separation from his disciples. No sense of his spiritual presence was allowed to haunt their minds. On fast days mutual confession was enjoined upon the "order," under most solemn circumstances. These confessions occurred once a fortnight, and degradation of rank followed any

Self-concentration.

Fortnightly confessions.

¹ A vast storehouse of information from the Sanscrit authorities as to the Vinaya, or discipline, may be found in Burnouf, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, pp. 233-437; in Spence Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*; and in Dr. R. Davids' translations from the *Kullavagga*, *Patimokha*, and *Mahavagga*. Sacred Books of the East, vols. xiii. and xvii.

admission of having violated the standing rules. Once a year all the members, summoned to some particular *vihara* (or monastery), were accustomed severally to ask their reverend brethren whether any of them had seen, heard, or suspected on the part of each anything inconsistent with their profession.

Yearly
scrutiny of
character.

In very early days they taught each other especially to visit and venerate the four holy places: (a) where Gautama was born, (b) where he received the highest illumination, (c) where he set in motion "the wheel of the law," and (d) where he entered into Nirvâna; and so a door was opened for the worship of other relics, and the deterioration of the faith.

Prescribed
visits to
holy places

An order of *nuns* was formed, and commanded to follow closely the rules which were imposed on monks. The striking peculiarity discriminating it from Christian Monasticism, is the utterly inferior rank and kind of holiness supposed to be secured by woman, as compared with man. The most rigid separation of the monks and nuns from each other was enjoined. The number of nuns was never great. As H. Oldenberg observes, "The thoughts and forms of life of Buddhism had been thought out and moulded solely by men and for men."

Order of
nuns
instituted

Inferior
rank of
woman.

The existence of these orders of monks and nuns in vast numbers implied that there was an outside world which recognized the virtue of such religious persons was ready to furnish them with the food

Inference
from the
numbers of
monks and
nuns

and raiment for which they silently asked, and in various ways to contribute to their comfort. Upon this laity also were urged the moral rules of the order, and for many generations the adherents must have been very numerous. How far they blended this new faith with their old Hinduism is not clear. A hundred years after the first council of five hundred disciples, a second was held at *Vaisali*, where certain ceremonial indulgences were instituted, and where great difference of opinion began to prevail as to the number and nature of the sacred books, and the degree of austerity necessary to secure the highest end of their calling.

Institution of ceremonial indulgences at the Council at Vaisali.

Differences of opinion.

About the time of Alexander's invasion of Asia, the political changes then going on in the peninsula led to the elevation of one race to the highest political eminence. A man who appears to be known in Greek history as Sandracottus (Chandragupta), seized the hegemony of the Indian royalties, and founded a dynasty at **MAGADHA**, almost geographically coincident with the district now known as *Oude*. The third succesor of Chandragupta, *Piyadasi* by name, under the honorific title of *Asoka* became a devout Buddhist, and performed prodigies of zeal for the diffusion, protection, and defence of the faith. He is at once the Constantine, the Theodosius, the Charlemagne of Buddhodom, and his name is honoured from Mongolia to Ceylon. The adventitious aid thus

Asoka's conversion to Buddhism and his propagation and defence of it.

afforded by the secular power to a spiritual order was "the first step on its downward path, and to its expulsion from India." Asoka provided *dagobas* for the relics of Buddha, monasteries and material help of all kinds, proclaimed edicts, and engraved them on pillars which are still to be found in Delhi, Allahabad, near Peshawr, and at Babra. These monuments have been explored by a race of scholars, showing that the Buddhism of Asoka's time in the main urged the simple morality of the earliest discourses of Buddha, enjoined obedience to parents, kindness to children, mercy to animals, reverence to Brahmins and to the order, suppression of anger and lust, and the exercise of tolerance and charity. A noble sentence occurs in Edict vi., on the Delhi pillar:—

The aid of the secular power the first step to its expulsion from India.

The teaching of the Buddhism of Asoka's time.

"I pray with every variety of prayer for those who differ from me in creed, that they following my proper example may with me attain unto eternal salvation."

Asoka called the Council of Patna, where 1000 principal members of the order were assembled. These determined the canon of the sacred books.

The Council of Patna.

One of the most eventful consequences of this council was the despatch of missionaries to distant regions, to proclaim the method of "deliverance," secured by Buddha from the miseries of the universe. The names of the most renowned of these missionaries are preserved. We find they went—among other outlying districts—to Ceylon.

The despatch of missionaries to distant regions.

King
Asoka's son
sent to
Ceylon.

An order
of nuns
instituted
there.

Thither King Asoka's own son *Mahinda* was sent between 250 and 230 B.C., and there he translated the canon into the vernacular of the island. The king of Ceylon was willing to receive the mission, and erected dagobas over relics of Buddha, and monasteries for the order. The sister of Mahinda accompanied him, and there instituted with like enthusiasm an order of nuns. A portion of the Bô-tree which she planted is still growing, the *oldest historic tree in the world*. It was in Ceylon that for the first time about 88 B.C. the *three pitakas* (baskets, or collection of treatises) were reduced to a *written* form. They had been preserved in the memories of successive generations, just as for centuries the Mishna and Gemaras were held in the memories of the Rabbis, and as to the present day, the Vedas, and the Canon of Hebrew Scripture, and the rabbinical comments on the oral and written word, could be verbally recovered from those whose sole function it is ceaselessly to recite them.

The original
Bible of
Buddha-
dom.

The re-translation into the old sacred language of Mahinda's Sinhalese version of the three groups of treatises constitutes the *Tri-pitaka*, or "three baskets" — the original BIBLE of Buddhodom. They are accessible in part to European readers in the translations by Gogerly, Max Müller, E. Burnouf, Rhys Davids, and others.

The part taken by Ceylonese Buddhists corresponds with the work done for Christian literature by the scholars of Alexandria and Cæsarea. The faith has preserved its pristine form in Ceylon and Burmah more obviously than it did in India itself. The most imposing event in the history of the faith is that which, about the time of the Christian era, transmitted it to China. The particular form of it which took that great departure, differs in some essential features from that which became classic and sacred in Ceylon, and which is represented in the Pali literature.

The transmission of Buddhism to China.

A grave difference of judgment which prevailed at the Patna Council, on the extent of the Canon of Sacred Books and on the rules of the Order, led to the formation of many discordant sects. These may be roughly regarded in the main as *two*, and characterized (*a*) as the followers of the "Little Vehicle," *Hinayana*; and (*b*) the adherents of *Mahayana*, or the "Great Vehicle." This distinction took its nomenclature from another great council of Buddhists, held about the time of the Christian era, under the direction of Kanishka, the then ruler of Kashmir. One line of demarcation between the two schools was that whereas the *Hinayana*—or the books alone known to the southern Buddhists—were written in Pali, the books of the "Great Vehicle" were more

Differences about the Canon of Sacred Books originated various sects.

Line of demarcation between the two main schools—the followers of the "Little Vehicle" and the adherents of the "Great Vehicle."

Controversy as to the relative antiquity of the two Vehicles.

Chinese, Tibetan, and Nepalese Buddhism originated in the "Great Vehicle."

The contest between Confucianism and Buddhism.

numerous, and were written in Sanscrit.¹ A controversy, resembling that between advocates of the longer and shorter recensions of the letters of Ignatius, has prevailed as to the relative antiquity of the two Vehicles. The general opinion of scholars is that the Pali documents undoubtedly contain the most venerable and primitive traditions and sayings of Buddha, but the great expansive energies of Buddhism which have enabled it to hold in its embrace the vast populations of China, and the extraordinary subsequent accretions to the faith in Tibet and Nepal, have taken their origin in the *Great Vehicle* and the Sanscrit literature. The great contest between Confucianism and Buddhism turned on the fact that the latter reinforced the moral precepts common to them both, with motives drawn from a future life, the rewards of virtue, the punishment of transgression. The Confucianist declared these to be illusory and ignoble; the Buddhists maintained them to be rational and worthy. But if Buddha himself were supposed

¹ The two most celebrated Sanscrit Books are (1) the *Lalita Vistara*, which has been cried up as the most precious memorial of the early Buddhism by some writers, *e.g.*, M. St. Hilaire and Mr. Lilly. Dr. Davids argues (Hibbert Lectures, pp. 197, ff.) that the first certain proof of its existence is the Tibetan translation of it in the sixth century A.D. There may be Chinese translations much earlier, this is not proved; (2) the *Prājna-Paramita*, the great metaphysical treatise, analyzed by Burnouf pp. 438, ff., exhibits the later development of the Buddhist doctrine.

to have passed into utter non-continuity of being, and *Nirvāna* meant for them the state of mind from which no *karma* could henceforth entrain the elements of consciousness into corporeal form; the future life is an impossibility, and its power to influence the moral judgments infinitesimal.¹

The *Mahayana* treatises (whether *Vinaya*, *Sutra*, or *Abidharma*), however highly they estimate Buddha, introduce a new and enormous development of thought by describing the character, home, enjoyment, and power of the great *Bodhi-sattwa*—beings, that is, who reached the condition of *Arhat* on earth, and having died, await a final birth into this world. There is the germ of this mythological expansion in the *Pali* books; and in some southern temples, worship or honour is given to *Maitreya*, the Buddha of the future; but as early as 400 A.D. *Fahian*, the great Chinese pilgrim to the holy land of *Buddhadom*, finds the homage to *Manjusri* and *Avalokiteswara* all but universal. Great discussion prevailed in the north-western provinces of India, as to the nature of soul itself. The purest and strongest idealism began to prevail. "All things that exist result from the

The new and great development in the *Mahayana* treatises.

Discussions about the soul.

The prevalence of idealism.

¹ The history of Chinese Buddhism may be read in *Beal's Chinese Buddhism*, and Dr. Edkins' work on the same subject; also in *Beal's Introduction to the Travels of Fahian and Hiouen Thsang* and *Vie de Hiouen Thsang*, translated into French by M. Stanislas Julien.

heart," they said. "All things material are empty." "All things are just what the mind reports them." Such formulæ must have made havoc of the doctrine of the negation of soul, and opened the way to boundless speculation. World upon world was fabled where these mighty Boddhi-sattwas ruled, as "Supreme wisdom," "Visual power," "Perfect holiness," and the like.

Fabled
worlds.

The most impressive and far-reaching effect was produced among the northern Buddhists by the supposed AMITABHA. Amitabha was said to preside in a world far away to the west, where all the conditions are different from those in this world. No transmigration there introduces its endless dance. The precious metals and gems abound. Thousands of Buddhas dwell there in royal peace. Amitabha ("boundless age") has been living there for a practical eternity. Two great Boddhi-sattwas aid him in saving multitudes of living beings, who are born on their death into the paradise of his presence.

The world
presided
over by
Amitabha.

His saving
work.

This is only one of many similar imaginations, which fill up the arctic void left by the agnostic utterances of Gautama, and the arid speculations of the Sanscrit metaphysics. The very terms in which the Sutras express these tropical conceptions show that their inventions were allegorizing and romancing to an extreme degree; but the form of Buddhism which China has accepted, and which

Allegorizing
and
romancing
character of
these
inventions.

prevails to the present day is saturated with these ideas. This is most significant, and proves that the nihilism and intellectual self-sufficiency of the southern Buddhism has succumbed before the conception of personal continuity and of something akin to Divine grace.

Chinese Buddhism saturated with these ideas.

Significance of the fact.

One of the most affecting indications of the progress of the ideas of the Great Vehicle in China, is the fact that when in the seventh century A.D., Hiouen Tshang, the greatest of the Chinese pilgrims, was drawing near his end, his most exalted hope was that in consequence of the extent of his sacrifices, and the excellence of his work, he might be born into the palace and home where Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, dwells in light and glory and serene contemplations. The thick darkness of Nirvâna shimmers with the phantasms of imaginary paradises.

The dying desire of the greatest of the Chinese pilgrims.

There is little dispute that *Manjusri* is addressed in prayer as the enlightener of the world. He may or may not be identifiable with a great mendicant, who introduced Buddhism into Nepal. This missionary is looked upon as especially connected with the origination of the school of thought which issued in the "Great Vehicle." Perfect wisdom is undoubtedly attributed to him, and he is worshipped as God; while *Avalokiteswara*, "the Lord who looks down from on high," is the spirit of the Buddhas present in the community. Fourteen

The worship of Manjusri.

hundred years ago, he was addressed in prayer by Fahian with as much fervour as Indra or Siva is approached now by a devout Hindu.

The worship
of
Kwan-yin.

Another Boddhi-sattwa of immense popularity, adored through many provinces of China, etc., Mongolia and Tibet is *Kwan-yin*, "The infinite mercy." He is represented as a female figure holding in her arms a child, and certainly suggesting the idea that some semi-Christian influences may have moulded this form of modern Buddhism. However foreign this idea may be to the calm passionless agnosticism of earlier days, the vast majority of those who honour the name of Buddha have created a pantheon rich in personal characteristics, in objects of practical worship, and of fanatic idolatry. They have thus met the demands of the outraged human heart, by forming vague and distorted images of One who fills all things, all worlds, and all time with His presence.

The counter-
parts of the
mortal
Buddhas in
a super-
sensual
world.

A further late development of the Great Vehicle has exerted a vast influence on the popular mind. It amounts to this, that every mortal Buddha, down to the last, viz., Gautama, and the next, supposed to be Maitreya, has his counterpart or type of a Boddhi-sattwa in a super-sensual world. Thus Avalokiteswara is the great source or type of Gautama, and he again is the emanation of what was called a Dhyâni Buddha, in a still wider and loftier and purer region. Thus the Dhyâni

Buddha of Avalokiteswara, is Amitâbha, "the boundless age," or the "immeasurable light;" and there is the threefold unity of Amitâbha, Avalokiteswara and Gautama, to satisfy the longing of the worshipper for something more trustworthy than the annihilated man. Moreover, faith in Amitâbha is the grand instrument by which man may rise into the blessedness which he gives.

A portion of the Tibetan community, about the tenth century, A.D., resolved all the Dhyâni-Buddhas of the infinite past and of innumerable worlds into a unity, and spoke of the Supreme Buddha, the ADI-BUDDHA, who corresponds with the ultimate Divine Essence of the Gnostic schools, and from whom all emanations of life, human, angelic, prenatal, archetypal, and divine, have sprung.

The supreme
Buddha
of the
Tibetan
community.

In dealing therefore with Buddhadom as a concrete whole, it must be granted that among some of its disciples the conception of the supreme source of all being is recognised and worshipped.

Buddhism has suffered another development of extraordinary power in the country of *Tibet*. Here the ideas of Buddha were from the first associated with the thought of the great Boddhi-sattwa, Avalokiteswara, who was present by his spirit in the community of the faithful. In Tibet he was believed to reside especially in the most distinguished of them, and to take up his abode in

The great
Boddhi-
sattwa
Avalokite-
swara.

The Pope of
Buddhadom.

the chief pontiff or patriarch of their church, whom they called DALAI-LAMA. In him, the veritable Pope of Buddhadom, the ADI-BUDDHA is supposed to be incarnated. Long and stormy has been the conflict among rival claimants to this high position. His history is a striking parody upon that of the Pontifical See of Christendom. In the occupant of this blasphemous rank, that of God upon earth, is vested perpetually the supreme temporal power. The worship, the ceremonial, the ecclesiastical orders strangely correspond with those of the Roman Church.

The literary
treasures of
Tibet.

The researches of Csoma-de-Köros, of the two Schlaginweits, of Köppen, Mr. Rockhill and others, show that we have much to learn from the still unexplored literary treasures of Tibet. These consist of thousands of translations and commentaries upon the Sanscrit books, which deal with the life of Buddha, with the founding and nature of his order, and with the metaphysics of the schools. Many strange customs have been invented in Tibet, which have travelled thence into Mongolia,¹ by which the religious duties of the faithful may be expedited. The sacred biographies, rules of conduct and prayers, are inscribed on rolls and placed in cylinders, which are capable of being turned by the hand of the willing worshipper. He is told that by assisting these praying

Customs
originated
in Tibet.

¹ Gilmour, *Among the Mongols*.

cylinders to revolve, he acquires the merit of having perused the literature, or offered the prayers thus inscribed. More than this, the machinery is not infrequently set in motion by windmills, which thus greatly cheapen the merit of all who share in their erection !

It is impossible to trace the utter decadence and disappearance of Buddhist faith in the land of its origin. But about the seventh century, the Brahminical order and the civil power utterly crushed or expelled the Buddhist system and profession from India. For a while the two forms of faith must have existed side by side, as the ruins around Benares and Delhi, and the caves of Ellora prove. Even the mythology of Brahmins regarded Buddha as one of the Avatars of Vishnu, though Buddhists themselves are spoken of with malice and contempt.

The Jains of Western India represent probably an analogous movement to that which was inaugurated by Gautama, and their sect was probably swollen during the persecutions of the tenth and eleventh centuries by refugees from the old body. When the Chinese pilgrim visited India in the seventh century, he saw in many places but the remnant of what was once a flourishing community, and three hundred years later it had utterly vanished. It may be we trace the echoes of its influence in the Bhagavad Gita, in the

Decadence
of Buddhism
in India.

The move-
ment repre-
sented by
the Jains of
Western
India
analogous
to that
inaugurated
by Gautama.

worship of Jaganath,¹ and in the speculations of some of the schools of Hindu philosophy.

Buddhadom
a simula-
crum of
Christendom

The birth-
place of
Buddhism
desecrated.

In Ceylon it
exists in its
most ancient
form.

Pontifical
development
in Tibet.

Buddhism has assumed other shapes in Japan and Siam, in the Tartar kingdoms, and in the modern life of Burmah and Ceylon. We can without difficulty discern in this brief outline of Buddhadom, a most impressive simulacrum of Christendom. We see the place of its origin desecrated and trampled upon by strangers, we discern its most antique and veritable form in active and energetic exercise in the great island of Ceylon. There its nihilism and its atheism are the orthodox faith. There Buddha is venerated as the saint, than whom among Gods or men there hath not risen a greater; but even in Ceylon we see that its disciples have been able to blend it with magic and aboriginal deva-worship of the island. In India, among the Jains, it has blossomed into a portentous mythology; throughout China it has blended with the man-homage of the middle kingdom, and the religious nature inherent in man has allowed the mists of Nirvâna to wreath themselves into the apocalyptic splendours of the paradise of Amitâbha. In Tibet it has developed a pontifical system, with a group of cardinals, and a splendour of mystery and ritual rivalling the most imposing functions of the Vatican. In Japan, coupled with a larger element

¹ William Erskine, *Remains of Buddhists in India*, Literary Transactions of Bombay Society, Vol. III,

of the old nature worship, it has inspired religious practices, revival services at which thousands of ecstatic devotees cry out for the mercy of Amitâbha. Buddhism on a stupendous scale has occupied the thoughts, stimulated the speculations, and to some extent satisfied the craving of mankind.

Its influence
in Japan.

Where its first principles have been most widely departed from, as in Tibet, there some very close resemblance to the Roman Catholic doctrine, order, and ritual, arrests attention. The real resemblances to ecclesiastical, not primitive Christianity, are deviations from its ideal and from its orthodoxy. The fancied and superficial resemblances do, on closer inquiry, reveal essential differences.

Resembles
Roman
Catholicism
most where
it has most
widely
departed
from its
first
principles.

A few words finally on *the antithesis and fundamental differences between Buddhism and Christianity*. The most essential divergence between the two systems is seen (*a*) in the *nature* and *object* of worship. The earliest informants to which we can appeal, the portions of the Tri-pitaka in the Pâli canon, including the (Sutras) discourses of Gautama, while they heap in Oriental hyperbole the phrases of extravagant eulogy upon the person of Gautama, and extol his wisdom as though it were boundless, never do attribute to him creative powers, or the Divine glory and claims. Mr. S. Hardy quotes from a high Sinhalese authority :—

Contrast
with
Christian-
ity.

The nature
and object
of worship.

“The eye cannot see anything, nor the ear hear anything more excellent, more worthy of regard than Bud-dha. The Rishis

may tell the number of metres in the sky, hide the earth with the tip of the finger, may shake the forest of Himâla by a cotton thread; but there is no being who can swim to the opposite side of the ocean of excellence possessed by Buddha.”¹

The sacred books virtually deify Buddha.

The Sacred Books and the people do virtually deify him, and yet there is an enormous difference between their treatment of him, their greatest, and what we mean by religious worship. The *Yasomitra* (quoted by Burnouf) declares that:—

“If God, or spirit, or matter were the original cause of the universe, then the universe would have been created at once, for the cause could not exist without producing its effect; but that inasmuch as all things follow a perpetual cycle, animals from the wombs of mothers, trees from little seeds, a vast cycle of events and not a will or a cause have produced the universe.”

No Creator, Moral Governor, nor Supreme Lawgiver in the Suttras of Buddha.

In none of the Sutras of Buddha is there any trace of any world-creating substance, any Being in whom all things live. The universe is an awful fact, whose tyranny is to be subdued by the intellectual apprehension of its impermanence and illusion. Moral duties are inculcated without any reference to the Giver of any law or to any Creator, Deliverer, or Lord of the human spirit. There is much honour done to him who has unriddled the mystery of suffering, but none to Him whose laws constitute the basis of the moral universe.

The recoil from the nihilism at the back of all things.

The heart of man has recoiled from the utter nihilism at the back of all things, and has in northern Buddhism (as we have seen) imagined a

¹ *Manual of Buddhism*, pp. 359-363; quoting the MS. of the *Sadharmaratuukaie*.

circle of lofty beings, who are able to help and soothe the desolate spirit, when it turns from the illusions of sense. Amitabha and Maitreya (called *Omito* and *Mile*), and other vast powers, are approached in reverence and prayer; but throughout China, Buddha himself, the greatest of them all, is not appealed to for present help in time of trouble, any more than is Confucius or Laotse.

The imagined comforters and helpers of Northern Buddhism.

(b) The Buddhist doctrine of *the ground of the universe* is utterly agnostic, if not positively atheistic. The tendency to suffering is universal, and immoral actions augment it. The most iron fate links action with action, and affiliates every possible condition or circumstance—all alike wretched—to some perversion of will in the present or previous lives; but this chain of causation is not to the Buddhist an act of a supreme will, or *modus operandi* of any moral being. Prayer cannot alter its incidence, and no power outside of man can aid the devotee. “Work out *your own* salvation” by self-obliteration and obedience, is the last word of Buddha.

The Buddhist doctrine of the ground of the universe agnostic.

With this root principle Christianity is absolutely discrepant, and can come into no terms of agreement or compromise. The Christ is the Revealer of the Father in heaven, because He is the only-begotten and eternal Son incarnate, and He maintains against all the lies and corruption of the human heart, and all the peril of the human soul, His supreme goodness, justice, power, and love. The

Christ as the eternal Son is the revealer of the Father.

idea that God is LOVE, that God is SPIRIT, that God is LIGHT, that the knowledge of God is eternal life, is the logical contradictory of Buddhism.

The Buddhist theory of the universe.

The Buddhist theory of the universe is that it forms one vast lazar-house, through which the flame of all-devouring desire and boundless illusion is ever rushing. Continuity of suffering does not quench the flame. Death does not deliver life from its incessant, consuming fire. The only salvation is such a habit of mind as becomes insensible to the flame, and is the obliteration of all desire. The Christian theory of suffering is that it is caused and intensified by sin; that the universe is the Father's house, that in the restoration of filial relations with Him there is fulness of joy, and that suffering vanishes in the consciousness of perfect peace. The Buddhist admires, and all but adores, the memory of the Gautama the Buddha, because he is supposed to have revealed the way out of the cycle of birth and death. The Christian adores the Son of God, who by reason of His incarnation and death upon the cross to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, has been highly exalted and received "the name that is above every name." In His own hand He holds the keys of death and hades, and delivers man from death by the gift and fulness of the eternal life beyond the grave.

The Christian theory of the universe as the Father's house.

Why the Buddhist admires Gautama.

Why the Christian adores the Son of God.

(c) Buddhism recognizes sin against the moral

law; but the law is impersonal, and the wages of sin are imposed by eternal fate. It has no conception of pardon, or redemption, or sacrifice. Christianity recognizes an awful possibility of sin and punishment, and a widely present sorrow; but it brings to human corruption a sufficient antidote, replaces evil desires by consuming thirst for that which is the holiest and the best; it reveals a joy of reconciliation with God, that transmutes the sorrow into blessedness, and gilds the bed of death with light. It makes union with the Infinite God, through the incarnation and sacrifice of the God-man, the hope of the world. Buddhism has no gospel for the ignorant or the babe, holds out no hope of deliverance except to the wise and prudent, to the learned and strong. It has conjured up a world of fancied terrors, from which it would save all forms of life, when they shall have once reached the pinnacle of metaphysical subtlety. Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of God."

(d) Verily Buddhism, throughout its vast extent of pessimistic cosmology and ethical fatality, with its ghastly Nirvâna, and the hopelessness of its *summum bonum*, seems to us to be *an exceeding bitter cry for that which Christianity has to offer*. It proclaims the misery of man, but has stumbled in its explanation of that misery. It proclaims the evil

Sin according to Buddhism

The Christian antidote to sin.

Buddhism has no gospel for the ignorant or the babe.

Jesus calls the burdened and children to Himself.

The exceeding bitter cry of Buddhism.

The mute
prophecy of
Buddhism.

of sin, and though it leaves no place for forgiveness and has no notion of a Redeemer, it vaguely asks for pardon, justification, and eternal life. Its willingness to accept a noble ideal of manhood when made known to it, is a mute prophecy that when the true Man is revealed to it, it will call Him "Lord of all." Verily our Lord would have said of Gautama, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God;" and he would have exclaimed "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto Thee?"

The idea of
humanity
as a whole
grasped by
Buddhism.

Buddhism
has
embraced
some races,
but
Christianity
has mas-
tered men
of every
race.

Hope
concerning
the
Buddhist
millions.

Buddhism grasped the idea of humanity as a whole, and this proclaims a nearer approach to Christianity than any heathen religion. It has embraced Aryan and Tartar, Chinaman and Turkoman, in its arms; but Christianity has mastered every kind of man. In Him who is One with the Father, the Aryan and Semite, the Barbarian and Scythian, the Saxon and Celt, the philosopher and child, have found their deepest unity. Surely it is not too much to hope that the Christian Church may even yet convince the Buddhist millions, that not blind destiny but Infinite Love enwraps this universe, that the fear of endless transmigration from eternity to eternity is an unsustained delusion, that there is One "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

AUGUSTE COMTE
AND THE
"RELIGION OF HUMANITY"
BY THE
REV. J. RADFORD THOMSON, M.A.

Argument of the Tract.

THE process is described by which Comte, the author of the "Positive Philosophy," which limits human knowledge to the results of observation and experiment, came to be the founder of the "Religion of Humanity." His aim is acknowledged to have been the illumination of the intellect by the heart. The Comtists are shown to elevate mankind, and especially illustrious benefactors of the race, and woman, as the emotional and spiritual sex, into the object of worship and veneration. The Positivist Church and its organization are described, and the moral, political, and social views of Comte's followers are stated.

The Tract then proves that the Religion of Humanity is both atheistic and idolatrous, that human beings are not worthy objects of supreme reverence and adoration, and that true prayer is not a possible exercise on the part of those who disbelieve in a Being almighty and benevolent. Positivism is shown to be lacking in moral authority over human conduct. The unreality of the Positivist immortality is exhibited.

The Religion of Humanity is then in several particulars contrasted with the Religion of Christ, with the result of showing the essential superiority of the latter in every respect.

AUGUSTE COMTE,

AND

“THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.”



I.

THE AUTHOR AND ORIGIN OF THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.



AUGUSTE COMTE, who was born in 1798, and who died in 1857, was a man who made his mark upon the intellectual history of this century. His reputation and influence have not been limited to his native country—France—but have, in the course of a generation, spread through the civilised world. He founded a school of philosophy; but his power has been felt far beyond the limits of his school. His spirit has penetrated many students and thinkers who are not adherents of the system known by his name. Comte has been called by an admirer “the Bacon of the nineteenth century;” we may dismiss such an estimate of his rank as exaggerated, and may yet admit that he has made for himself a place among the intellectual and social leaders of our time. It is further claimed for him that he has invented a new religion.

Comte is a thinker who has exercised great influence both in France and elsewhere.

His attainments were great; his passion for classification was excessive; his ambition was vast.

In his youth and early manhood, Comte was a most diligent and enthusiastic reader, and under the influence especially of Saint Simon and de Maistre, the Utopian Socialists of the day, an ardent student of all social questions. His attainments in mathematics, his extensive acquaintance with European history, his knowledge of the physical sciences, in the stage of development in which they existed in his early days, are all admitted and recognised. His sympathies were less with the destructive tendency, which originated with Voltaire and Rousseau, than with what he deemed the constructive forces, represented by Diderot, Hume, and Condorcet. He regarded Bichat and Gall as his precursors in science. Possessing unbounded self-confidence, and a passion—even a genius—for classification, Comte made it his ambitious aim, by means of his teaching and his writings, to reconstitute science and philosophy, to revolutionize education, and thus to regenerate humanity.

The "positive" philosophy would limit knowledge to what can be acquired by observation and experiment.

POSITIVISM is the name given by its author to the vast body of doctrine presented to the world by this professed prophet and priest of the nineteenth century. By the term "positive" Comte intended to designate such knowledge as is based upon actual observation and experiment,—the accepted methods of modern physical science. Nothing else is, in his view, true knowledge; philosophy, as hitherto understood, and of course theology of

every kind, are dismissed, as outgrown and abandoned by this age, steeped as it is in the modern scientific spirit. Comte's writings were encyclopædic; his system was professedly comprehensive of all human knowledge. His two great works, *Positive Philosophy* and *Positive Polity*, were designed to include all the sciences of nature and of man, and the classification of these sciences was represented as being the true and indeed the only philosophy.

Evidently, “Positive-ism,” strictly interpreted, is inconsistent with all metaphysics and all theology.

Much of what Comte wrote has no longer any special value or interest. But in two directions, one speculative and the other practical, his influence survives to the present day. He advanced a startling theory of human development, and he propounded a religion and established a church. The first of these must be briefly explained, as very closely connected with the second.

In two directions Comte's influence still survives.

The intellectual growth of mankind is represented by Comte as passing through three successive stages or epochs. The first of these is the *theological* stage of knowledge, in which the facts of nature are explained by the supposed presence and action of supernatural beings. Men are supposed to begin their religious development with fetichism, to proceed to the higher position of polytheism, and thence to advance to Monotheism, which is deemed the summit of this first movement. The second is the *metaphysical* stage, in which all unseen personal agencies are discarded, and

His doctrine of the three stages of the intellectual development of mankind.

According to Comte, the "positive" stage is to supersede the theological and the metaphysical.

principles, laws, abstractions which are the creation of the mind, are represented as accounting for natural phenomena. The third is the *positive* stage, which has now at length been reached by the most enlightened of mankind. These have outgrown the intellectual illusions of childhood and youth, and are content to take phenomena as they find them, to classify them in co-existences and sequences, and to renounce as vain and useless all search for causes, whether personal or metaphysical.

Such a doctrine as this certainly appears to forbid scientific men to retain religion of any kind, in fact to preclude the possibility of religion except in the case of the ignorant and unreasoning. Through the greater part of his life, Comte seems to have regarded science as completely satisfying the wants of his nature, and accordingly to have utterly ignored all religious beliefs and practices. How, it may well be asked, can the so-called "positive" stage of human development admit of a Deity, of prayer, of thanksgiving, of a priesthood and sacraments, of immortality? The answer to this question must be sought in Comte's own personal experience, in circumstances occurring in his life, in the history of his heart. The process by which he came to feel the need of religion for himself, and so to found a religion in his judgment adapted to a scientific age, is well worthy of careful attention,

Until he approached middle age, Comte altogether ignored and repudiated all religion

It was by feminine influence that Comte was led to crown the “Positive” philosophy by the “Positive” religion, usually designated, to distinguish it from Theism, “the Religion of Humanity.” Comte’s marriage was not a happy one; and after many years of wedded life, the *savant* was separated, on account of incompatibility of temper, from the wife who had borne with him in his petulance, and watched over him during a period of mental derangement. After this separation he made the acquaintance of Madame Clotilde de Vaux—a young woman of thirty, and seventeen years his junior—who came to exercise an extraordinary influence over his character, and indirectly over his teaching. The object of his admiration was, like himself, unhappy in marriage, and was separated from her husband, who was at this time a convict undergoing punishment. Her qualities of understanding and of heart called forth the devotion of the Positivist prophet, opened a fresh fountain of feeling in his nature, and led him to take a different view of human life. He wrote of his “St. Clotilde” in terms of extravagant eulogy, as

His intimacy with Clotilde de Vaux was the occasion of a great change in his view of the necessities of man’s moral nature and life.

“the incomparable angel appointed in the course of human destiny to transmit to me the results of the gradual evolution of our moral nature.”

The friendship lasted but a year; Madame de Vaux died in 1846, but bequeathed to her admirer an influence which lasted all the remainder of his

From this time Comte regarded the emotional life as more important than the intellectual.

life, and which affected all his subsequent speculations. From this period may be dated what has been termed the new birth of Comte's moral nature. Up to this point knowledge had been everything to him; henceforward he confessed the supremacy of the affections and the claims of what he held to be religion. In the dedication to Clotilde's memory, of his great work on *Positive Polity*, Comte records that it was her influence that had taught him the preponderance of universal love.

"After frankly devoting the first half of my life to the development of the heart by the intellect, I saw its second half consecrated by the illumination of the intellect by the heart, so necessary to give the true character to great social truths."

This change on Comte's part caused a schism in the ranks of Comte's followers.

Some refused to follow him in his new departure.

Thus Positivism was transformed from a very secular doctrine into one in which everything was subordinated to emotion, morality, worship, and religion. The change was variously regarded. Many of Comte's followers refused to accompany him upon this new departure. Such was the case with his most distinguished French disciple, M. Littré; whilst his English admirer and friend, Mr. J. S. Mill, criticised the master's aberration with extreme severity, and went so far as to say:—

"M. Comte gradually acquired a real hatred for scientific and all intellectual pursuits, and was bent on retaining no more of them than was strictly indispensable."

On the other hand, the thorough-going scholars in the Positivist school regard the emotional and moral stage of Comte's life with reverence and

gratitude. An English representative of what may be called Ecclesiastical Positivism speaks thus warmly of the high-priest of the new religion :—

Others admired and accepted his later teaching, adopting his new religion.

“It should become clear to us that the philosophical and political thinker had merged in the saint, that the life of thought was so fruitful of good because it was a life of prayer, that if he preached sacrifice to others, no man ever lived who imposed it more completely on himself; that if he preached humanity to others, he had been the first to give her all, to consecrate every faculty and power to her service; that if he made love his watchword, it was because he was the most loving of men.”¹

Comte’s own view of the relation between the two sections of his life is apparent from his remark with reference to Madame de Vaux :—

“Through her I have at length become for humanity, in the strictest sense, a two-fold organ. . . My career had been that of Aristotle—I should have wanted energy for that of St. Paul, but for her. I had extracted sound philosophy from real science; I was enabled by her to found on the basis of that philosophy the universal religion.”²

II.

THE POSITIVIST VIEW OF RELIGION.

COMTE and his followers disbelieve in the supernatural; to their minds faith in an unseen Creator and Ruler of the universe appears unscientific, and unworthy of enlightened cultivators of physical science, of “Positive” knowledge. On the other hand, the master, and those of the scholars who

The Comtists disbelieve in God.

¹ Congreve, *The Annual Address*, Jan. 1, 1881.

² *Catechism*, Preface, p. 19.

But those who agree with Comte in his later development maintain the necessity of religion as a power to influence men's individual and social life.

Comte considered that he reconciled Religion with Science by substituting humanity for God as the supreme object of reverence and worship.

follow him in the later development of his teaching, have always and earnestly repudiated secularism, and have claimed to be truly religious,—only with a kind of religiousness becoming, as they think, to men living in a scientific age, and having no sympathy with superstition! The Positivist religion boasts itself as “the concurrence of feeling with reason in the regulation of our action.” Comte himself taught that religion has two functions: viz., to order the life of the individual, and to combine men into a social unity. It must, as an intellectual power, satisfy the mind with truth, the object of belief; and it must, as a moral power, satisfy the heart with appropriate emotion.

This, however, is morality rather than religion. Comte saw that men need not only a law of conduct, but an object of reverence. He accordingly sought to replace the sentiments and motives evoked by Christianity by raising HUMANITY into the supreme place in human regard. He was right in recognizing the superiority of man over matter, of human virtue above physical law. But he was wrong in exalting man into the place of God. However, the Comtists believe that religion is possible upon their basis of the supremacy of humanity. Positivism, one of them tells us,

“will be religion, inasmuch as it will infuse a grandeur and a unity into human toil, knowledge, and interests, by filling them with all the light of duty, and the warmth of a social affection. In every part it will be a human religion, a perfectly practical

and mundane religion, grounded in thought, and issuing in act ; beginning on earth, and ending in man.”¹

The English school of Positivists lay the greatest stress upon the religious aspect of their system, and persuade themselves that all the good results which Christianity has brought to past ages may be secured by a religion more in harmony, as they hold, with the spirit of our own times. Thus Mr. Frederic Harrison urges :

In this belief the English Positivists are in accord with their master.

“All the eternal and essential institutions of religion are not only open to Positivism, but are profoundly developed and embraced by it. It is familiar too with that sense of individual weakness and yearning for consolation, that spirit of humiliation before Providence, and contrition in the consciousness of guilt, that peace within in communing with an abiding sweetness and goodness without, that unquenchable assurance of triumph in final good—all of which are the old and just privileges of the purest Christianity.”²

The reader may well be curious to know what there is in the Positivist religion to justify such assertions and such expectations as are contained in the writings of Comte and his followers. Of Christianity we know that it professes to reveal a God of righteousness and of mercy, a God loving and pitying mankind, and able to save and bless those sinful beings who turn to Him in penitence and in faith ; that it professes to reveal a Divine Saviour, and a Divine Helper, unseen but ever present ; that it brings new motives, new powers,

We know what Christianity can do, and has done, for mankind.

¹ Congreve, *New Year's Address*, for 1880.

Contemporary Review, November, 1875.

We accordingly ask, Can the "Religion of Humanity" rival the Religion of Christ, as a Revelation and as a Moral Force ?

new hopes to men ; that it professes to reveal a future state with prospects of retribution and of recompense. Such a religion must have, and actually has and exercises, a vast spiritual power. What has Comtism to offer to the world, that it ventures to vie with the faith of Christ? So far as can be gathered from its documents, it offers us a body of scientific doctrine, the lessons and examples of human history, a scheme of worship, with the apparatus of priesthood, liturgy, sacraments, the outward and visible sign of human federation, and a system of government of the most fantastical order. Religion is to centre in Humanity. To quote the words of the founder of this religion :

"Under the permanent inspiration of Universal Love, the business of doctrine, worship, and discipline, is to study, to honour, and to serve the great Being, the crown of all human existence."¹

III.

THE POSITIVIST GOD.

Positivism personifies humanity.

ALL religion assumes the existence and the rule of a higher Being, worthy of worship and service. Comte proposed that reverence, praise and devotion should be rendered, not to a Deity above humanity, the Creator and the Governor of all men, but to humanity, the collective human race and especially to the great men of the past. Posi-

¹ *Positive Polity*, vol. II., p. 66.

tivism means the sovereignty of the dead over the living. Comte personified Humanity.

“We condense the whole of our positive conceptions in the one single idea of an immense and eternal Being, Humanity, destined by sociological laws to constant development under the preponderating influence of biological and cosmological necessities.”¹

“Towards Humanity, who is for us the only true great Being, we, the conscious elements of whom she is composed, shall henceforth direct every aspect of our life, individual or collective. Our thoughts will be devoted to the knowledge of humanity, our affections to her love, our actions to her service.”²

But we are not to understand by the Humanity we are summoned to worship, all mankind, “good, bad, and indifferent,” but only such as have sought the common good. The “mere digesting machines” may, it is suggested, be replaced by the nobler among the brutes! The God, or Goddess, whom men should worship, is in a measure their own creation; Comte reminds men of the duty of preserving, developing, improving, and perfecting their Deity. But we are assured that the object of worship is no abstraction, but the actual assemblage of those who have led a noble and useful life.

It was, however, perceived by the founder of the Positivist religion that “Humanity” is to men generally somewhat vague, that they need to adore what is concrete, living, and personal. Thus

It proposes the personification of humanity as the Deity whom men should worship.

But in constructing his Divinity Comte eliminates the worthless and useless, and conjoins only select and admired representatives of our race.

Such an object of worship is evidently vague, and hard to realise.

¹ *The Catechism of Positive Religion*, p. 63.

² *Positive Polity*, vol. I., p. 264.

Hence Comte proposes that woman, as the emotional sex, should be the object of adoration and prayer.

Comte was led to the proposal that woman should be the object of ordinary and private worship. The "affective sex" (he held) embodies, in its best representatives, what is most worthy of religious reverence.

"Prayer would be of little value unless the mind could clearly define its object. The worship of woman satisfies this condition, and may thus be of greater efficacy than the worship of God."¹

Mother, wife, and daughter are to be venerated as types of moral excellence.

The worship of the Virgin Mary, so prevalent throughout the so-called Catholic world, was regarded by this ingenious idolater, as a happy introduction to the *cultus* of that graceful personification of humanity which we are called upon to admire in womankind. The mother speaks of the past, suggests obedience, and requires veneration. The wife speaks of the present, suggests union, and calls for attachment. The daughter is of the future, she needs protection, and is regarded with benevolence. Such a group of female relatives is commended as constituting collectively a suitable object of daily adoration. Women, however, are expected to worship the mother, the husband, and the son. It must not be supposed that this teaching was a mere eccentricity of Comte, occasioned by his admiration for his St. Clotilde. Mr. Congreve, a leader of English Positivism, presents the case very clearly:—

"What is the most universal constituent of this composite spirituality? The answer is clear. It is in woman that we find

¹ *Positive Polity*, vol. I., p. 209.

it; and therefore it is that, as the most universal and the most powerful of all modifying agents, woman is in our religion the representative of humanity.”¹

It may appear to the uninitiated that there is some confusion involved in the proposal to conjoin the worship of the Supreme Being, *i.e.*, the ideal Humanity, with that of an individual woman. Such a belief does not vanish when we consider Comte’s account of his own habitual worship of Clotilde. He anticipated the “extension to others of his own personal worship of the angel from whom he derived its chief suggestions.” He thus described the combination at which he arrived:

In his worship of Clotilde, Comte set an example which he desired his disciples to follow

“She [*i.e.*, Clotilde] is for all time incorporated into the true Supreme Being, of whom her tender image is allowed to be for me the best representative. In each of my three daily prayers I adore both together.”²

It would be interesting to know whether any habitual votaries of Clotilde de Vaux are to be found in the select circle of our English Positivists.

IV.

THE WORSHIP OF HUMANITY.

THE worship presented by the religious man to his deity is twofold. He brings his offering, a sacrifice, a hymn of praise, or an act of homage or obedience; and, whilst acknowledging favours received, he prays for spiritual or temporal good.

The prayers which Comte enjoins are rather acts of meditation and aspiration.

¹ *Human Catholicism*, p. 18.

² *Catechism*, Preface, p. 38.

Now Comte enjoins prayer, or rather meditation and aspiration, under the designations, "commemoration" and "effusion." Erroneous as is his conception of the object of worship, his account of fellowship with the Unseen is not without dignity and beauty.

The Religion of Humanity prescribes both private and public devotion.

"Prayer in its purest form offers the best type of life, and conversely life in its noblest aspect consists in one long prayer. The humblest home in Positivism should contain, better even than under Polytheism, a sort of private chapel, in which the worship of the true guardian angels would daily remind each Positivist of the need of adoring the finest personifications of humanity."¹

Private prayer is enjoined upon the disciple of Comte. He devotes

"the first hour of each day to place the whole day under the protection of the best representatives of humanity."²

He offers a shorter prayer at mid-day, and again at night as he sinks into slumber. The recommendation with regard to family prayer reminds us of the immemorial practice of the Chinese:—

"The father of the family invokes, as household gods, the chief ancestors of the family."³

Stated seasons of worship are appointed.

Private prayer should be observed daily, weekly, and yearly; public prayer weekly, monthly, and yearly. Whilst worship is to be offered only to the "great being," Humanity, it is contemplated that the Positivist temples shall contain a visible representation of the unseen object of adoration.

¹ *Positive Polity*, vol. II., p. 68. ² *Ibid.* vol. IV., p. 103.

³ *Ibid.* vol. IV., p. 107.

“In painting or in sculpture equally, the symbol of our Divinity will always be a woman of the age of thirty, with her son in her arms. The pre-eminence, religiously considered, of the affective sex, ought to be the principal feature in our emblematic representation, whilst the active sex must remain under her holy guardianship.”¹

If it is asked whether it is possible for Positivists to worship their human god in the methods consecrated by the usage of devout generations, the material for an answer to this question may be found in the prayers used by the priest of the Positivist community in London, which are prefixed to the annual addresses delivered upon New Year’s Day, the festival of Humanity, and regularly published. These prayers are addressed to

Some of the public prayers used by the English Positivists are published.

“the Great Power, acknowledged as the highest, Humanity, whose children and servants we are.”²

The petitions are, for the most part, petitions for a better knowledge of Humanity, with a view to warmer love and truer service, and that life may be strengthened and ennobled by sympathy and by mutual aid. Among the blessings ardently sought are union, unity, and continuity; but there is a lack of definiteness in the language, arising from the fact that the worshippers have no clear apprehension of the moral and religious qualities which alone can make these blessings precious and desirable. It is observable that the expressions of the Positivist prayers are largely borrowed from

The objects of supplication are necessarily somewhat indefinite.

¹ *Catechism*, p. 142. ² Vide *New Years’ Addresses*, passim.

the Christian Scriptures. The Positivists have their benediction, viz. :—

The Religion of Humanity sanctions the use of Benedictions and Collects.

“The faith of Humanity, the hope of Humanity, the love of Humanity, bring you comfort, and teach you sympathy, give you peace in yourselves and peace with others, now and for ever. Amen.”

There is an Advent collect, which represents Comte as the Messiah; the opening clauses shall be quoted to give the reader an insight into the evident desire of the Positivists to link their religion on, in thought and phrase, to the religion they hope to supersede :—

“Thou power Supreme, who hast hitherto guided Thy children under other names, but in this generation hast come to Thy own in Thy own proper person, revealed for all ages to come by Thy servant, Auguste Comte,” etc.

Christian manuals of devotion are adapted to the use of the “Human Catholics.”

In the same spirit, Thomas à Kempis’ devotional manual “Of the Imitation of Christ,” is approved by the Positivists as edifying reading; in fact, Comte himself used it daily in his religious exercises; but that it may be adapted to the use of “Human Catholics,” it is directed that “Humanity” be everywhere substituted for “God,” and “the social type” for the personal type of Jesus! What is left, when the Father and the Saviour of man are eliminated from this famous book of Christian devotion, may readily be imagined.

In the adoration and prayer offered to Humanity by her votaries, one thing is very obvious Whilst

the petitions of Christian worshippers are presented to a Being justly and confidently believed to comprehend and to sympathise with the wants of the petitioners, and to possess the power and disposition to grant the favours sought,—no Positivist can for a moment suppose that the dead and vanished persons who constitute the humanity of past ages, can possibly be conscious of the desires professedly poured into their ears, or can possibly do anything in response to prayer, to fulfil the supplications of their worshippers.

It is unreasonable in Positivists to pray to those who in the view of the worshippers, have no longer actual existence and consciousness.

V.

THE CHURCH OF HUMANITY

IT was Comte's aim to found a society composed of all who should acknowledge himself as the prophet of the new and crowning dispensation, and who should accordingly regard Humanity as the object of supreme reverence and affection. He perceived the mighty hold which Roman Catholicism had for centuries exercised over the mind and life of Europe, and he attributed this power to the adaptation of this mediæval system to the emotional and the social nature of man. He accordingly set himself to copy the methods and the very details of Romanism, and to institute a church upon the broader basis of *Human Catholicism*. There was this difference between the two

Comte aimed at imitating the Roman Catholic Church, but substituted his own ideas for those embodied in Roman usage.

systems: Roman Catholicism carried the supernatural into every region of human life, whilst Positivism sought to exercise religious influence by the use of means purely natural and human.

Thus the Church of Humanity came into existence. The founder of the Church drew up its calendar,—a very remarkable document which bears witness alike to the extent of Comte's knowledge, his love of system, and his width of sympathy. Each of the thirteen lunar months of the year is sacred to the memory of a great leader of humanity in some department of thought or of activity. Thus the first month is known by the name of Moses, and every one of the twenty-eight days in the month is commemorative of some distinguished man associated with the early religions of the race. The seventh days—the four Sabbaths of the month—are connected with the names of Numa, Buddha, Confucius and Mahomet,—chiefs in religious belief and in church organisation. The second month is consecrated to Homer and the ancient poets; the third to Aristotle and the ancient philosophers; and so on with the rest. The thirteenth month is known by the name of the physiologist, Bichat, and its days are all connected with the memory of men eminent in modern science. The complementary day is the "Festival of all the dead," and the additional day in leap-year is the "Festival of holy women."

The
Positivist
Calendar
celebrates
the virtues
and services
of the
illustrious
dead.

Comte also published a system of Sociolatriy, comprising eighty-one annual festivals, upon which the worship of Humanity should be celebrated. These were intended to replace the “holy days” and “saints’ days,” which form so important a part of the observances prescribed by Rome.

There are Positivist festivals corresponding to Catholic Saints’ Days.

In this system it must be evident to the reader that man is everywhere; whilst God is nowhere. Indeed, the religion of Humanity has been well described as “Catholicism without God.”

The Religion of Humanity exalts man and banishes God.

Positivism was intended by its founder to have its priesthood, supported at first by the free contributions of believers, and when the faith shall be generally adopted, by grants from the public treasury. Aspirants are to be admitted to the priestly office at the age of twenty-eight, vicars at thirty-five, and priests proper at forty-two. Marriage is required of those in the second stage:—

Positivism has its priesthood.

“for the priestly office cannot be duly performed unless the man be constantly under the influence of woman.”

The obligations of the priests of this religion

The business of priests is to teach the sciences, and to preach upon the duties of private and public life. The supreme head of the body is the high priest, who is to be invested with absolute power.¹ In his love of organisation, Comte went so far as to fix even the number and the stipends of the Positivist clergy.

¹ Comte was succeeded in the Pontifical office by M. Lafitte, the recognized head of orthodox Positivism.

It has its sacraments.

The character of these "sacraments."

The organisation of the "Church of Humanity" in Paris, its headquarters.

The position of this "Church" in England.

Nine sacraments were instituted: presentation, initiation, admission, destination, marriage, maturity, retirement, transformation, and incorporation. In the case of women, the fourth, sixth and seventh sacraments are dispensed with. The reader cannot fail to observe that, whilst the Christian sacraments are revelations of Divine purposes, and symbols of Divine acts, the Positivist institutions in question are all ordinances based merely upon human life, especially upon events occurring in its several stages.

It may be asked, Has any attempt been made to realise these schemes? In Paris, the metropolis of the Religion of Humanity, the institutions founded by Comte are maintained: there is a Positivist society, and high priest, there is public worship and commemoration, there are authorised publications advocating the Comtist doctrines.

The Positivists of London, who accept the later phase of Comte's teaching, are organised into a religious sect,—numerically indeed small, but comprising men of learning, ability, character, and influence. They hold religious service every Sunday morning, and social meetings on five Sunday evenings in the course of the year. The London members of the "Church of Humanity" observe the appointed festivals, make contributions

towards their sacerdotal fund, their school fund, their printing fund, and in their proceedings act in some measure in accordance with the ordinary usages of other English congregations.

In addition to two congregations in the metropolis, the religious Positivists of this country have regular meetings in a few of our large towns. In 1876 they acknowledged that, outside of France, they had no one in communion with them on the Continent of Europe, with the exception of *one* person in Sweden! In the same year it was mentioned that *one* Oriental—an Indian—was in fellowship with the body. They do not, however, seem discouraged by the slow progress they make as an organization, but rather look hopefully to the diffusion of their principles among those who do not join their assemblies.

This slow progress in a state of society which might be supposed to be peculiarly suited to the development of this humanitarian faith is certainly significant and suggestive, especially when compared with the rapid advance of various forms of Christian congregational life. Several obscure sects of English Christians, even with all the disadvantages of poverty, social insignificance, and an illiterate ministry, have been seen so to grow that, within a few years of their establishment, they have come to number hundreds of congregations and tens of thousands of adherents. The

The Religion of Humanity at present counts but few adherents.

Their rate of increase contrasted with the growth of some obscure Christian sects.

The difficulty of keeping together the two Positive congregations in London.

“Religion of Humanity,” on the other hand, has so little attraction for those who are supposed to be yearning for such satisfaction as it professes to offer, that, notwithstanding all the advantages which intellect, learning, and social position confer upon its leading representatives, it can with difficulty gather and keep together in the metropolis two small congregations! The adhesion of individuals is chronicled as matter for rejoicing; and it is recorded with seriousness as a reason for congratulation and as an omen of prosperity, that in a certain provincial congregation progress has been so striking and so encouraging that a harmonium has actually been introduced with the laudable design of aiding the public devotions of the faithful!

VI.

THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

Comte had definite political plans.

COMTE, though an ardent theorist, was not content to propound a so-called science of Sociology, — a science which aims at reducing all the facts relating to human societies and their actions to great generalisations and laws. He believed himself to be legislating for what, in his own grandiose way, he termed “the Republic of the West,” by which he meant the nations of Western Europe, with their offspring in America and the Colonies. He imagined

that the power of the Religion of Humanity would prove sufficient to induce the nations to resolve themselves into small communities, each including from one to three millions of inhabitants,—to give up “nationality,”—and to accept as the basis of their true unity the sway of the Positive faith. The new religion was to remould all political institutions. Comte had great hope that the proletariat, *i.e.*, the working classes, would hail his doctrine with enthusiasm. He intended that there should be an industrial patriciate having charge of the proletariat. These capitalists and masters were to include bankers, merchants, manufacturers, and agriculturists. A council of bankers was to rule all society ; with the advice of the Western priesthood, acting under the direction of the high priest of Humanity, this council was to fix the rate of wages, and to administer the social and industrial business of the civilised world.

He aimed at reconstructing society in the civilised nations.

Whilst the Positivists in our country claim to be, as a body, entirely dissevered from party politics, they professedly make it their aim to leaven national life with moral principle, and to influence national action in favour of justice and peace. Accepting the Christian doctrine of the universal brotherhood of men, they are often to be found advocating the Christian polity of mutual forbearance and goodwill.

The English Positivists endeavour to leaven politics with moral principle.

Comte himself was a very decided opponent of

Comte's con-
servatism.

those revolutionary forces which have during the last century played so mighty a part in the political life of his native country. His tendencies were mainly Conservative. He even hailed the accession to Imperial power of Napoleon III. He addressed the Czar of Russia, Nicholas I., in language of extravagant eulogy. It was his opposition to democracy, his subserviency to autocrats, that as much, perhaps, as his development of the religious stage of his doctrine, alienated from him some of his most admiring friends, especially his celebrated disciple, M. Littré. In his aversion to democracy Comte has not been followed by all his disciples. As a rule, the Positivists have cared more for the lofty ends of justice and peace, than for the special political means by which these ends may be sought and perhaps attained.

The influ-
ence of
Positivism
over English
thinkers and
writers.

Positivism has exercised a powerful influence over our contemporary English literature. We do not refer merely to the scientific, anti-philosophical, and anti-theological bias which such writers as the late Mr. G. H. Lewes received from the study of Comte's works, but also to the quasi-religious ideas which were imbibed from the same source by the late "George Eliot," and which are advocated with so much persistency and fervour by Mr. Frederic Harrison.

The stories, poems, and essays of "George Eliot" bear more than mere traces of Positivism; the

authoress herself described her longest poem as “steeped” in this doctrine. That devotion to the welfare of others, which Comte denominated “altruism,” was ardently adopted and commended by this writer, who seems to have substituted this form of benevolence for one more distinctively Christian. She was also possessed with the Comtean belief regarding the reign of the dead over the living. But she was utterly opposed to the Christian doctrine of God, and had no faith in Revelation. In her life occurs the following remarkable utterance:—

George Eliot adopted Comte's principles, and inculcated them in her writings.

“My books have for their main bearing a conclusion—without which I could not have cared to write any representation of human life, namely, that the fellowship between man and man, which has been the principle of development, social and moral, is not dependent on conceptions of what is not man; and that the idea of God, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the idea of a goodness entirely human, *i.e.*, an exaltation of the human.”¹

The main bearing of her books

We do not hesitate to say that just here, where this popular authoress placed her moral strength,—just here lay her moral weakness. She was well aware of the immense power for good residing in Christian faith when sincere and active. But the general tendency of her works is to suggest the possibility of a pure, self-denying, bright, and beneficent life, altogether apart from the motives and the hopes of the Christian Revelation, altogether

The impression produced by her works.

¹ *George Eliot's Life*. Letter to Lady Ponsonby. Vol. III., p. 245.

Her better characters unnatural because the motives that would account for their actions are ignored.

apart from belief in a Divine Ruler, and from expectation of retribution and of conscious development in a future state. Some of the better characters she describes strike the reader as unnatural, because the principles and motives which would fairly account for their actions, are ignored. A painful sense of defect mars the satisfaction of even the admiring reader; his mind seems to ache for truths withheld, for prospects darkened, for spiritual motives expunged by the destructive power of unbelief from the probationary and disciplinary life of man.

VII.

POSITIVISM, THOUGH AN ADVANCE UPON SOME OTHER FORMS OF UNBELIEF, IS VIRTUALLY ATHEISTIC.

If Revelation be rejected what substitute do unbelievers offer for the satisfaction and guidance of mankind?

WHAT, let us now ask, is offered by those eminent and able men, upon the Continent of Europe and in our own country, who reject revelation, and with revelation all that is supernatural in Christianity,—what is offered as the substitute? There are indeed some unbelievers who consider that no substitute is necessary or desirable, that man has no need of religion, that this life and its pursuits, interests, and pleasures are all-sufficient. But thorough-going Secularism (as this doctrine is termed) finds adherents chiefly among those of a

lower intellectual and moral type. By men of historical knowledge and philosophical insight it is generally admitted that man's higher nature can only be developed, that his higher aspirations can only be satisfied, when he accepts the declarations and gives himself up to the influence of religion. But the question is, Where shall the basis, the scope, the motive of religion be found, if God be denied, if revelation be pronounced impossible, if the supernatural element in the Bible be deemed incredible, if a future life be dismissed as an unfounded and unverifiable dream ?

Secularism is out of the question, as having attractions only for the lowest class intellectually and morally.

Two answers are given to this question. The answer given by Strauss in Germany, and by the author of *Natural Religion* in this country, is this: that the universe itself, as studied and represented by science, affords scope for our religious feelings ; that to admire nature, its vastness, regularity, and beauty, is sufficient for a religious being ; that the highest and purest emotions are thus evoked, and that human life is thus saved from Secularism. Further, as man is, in the view of these speculators, part of the universe, the productions of human art and the exhibitions of human virtue, are to be taken into account in estimating the power of so-called Cosmic religion.

But learned and able men propose as the religion of the future, the reverence for natural law and for ideal beauty: this is Cosmism

But there is another answer, that namely with which this tract is concerned. The Comtists differ not only from the Secularists, who think that no

The Positivists, deeming this an insufficient foundation for religion, propose that the Human shall be deified.

religion is necessary, but further, from the Cosmists, who think that the admiration of the universe is the all-sufficient religion for man. In the view of the Positivists there is something better than the facts and processes which can be formulated in mathematical and physical laws. MAN is superior to unconseious, to irrational nature. And since the Comtists believe that God is only the name for an abstraction, formed by projecting our own mental and moral character and attributes into the imaginary realm of the supernatural, they ask us to renounce what they regard as superstition, and to rest satisfied with what is undoubtedly real,—the race to which we belong and the characteristics which, as human beings, we share.

The Religion of Humanity is an advance upon Secularism and upon Cosmism.

We readily admit that it is a higher exercise of the soul to admire and to adore such human qualities as justice, love, and pity, than to admire and adore the revolutions of the planets, or the symmetries and correspondences observable in the various forms of life. But, after all said in favour of the Positivist religion, it remains undisputed that *it is not Theism*. That there is a Power superior in might and duration even to Humanity the Comtists do not deny.¹ But Comte himself regarded the constitution of the universe as faulty; it often aroused his indignation, it never awakened

But it falls short of Theism.

¹ Comte indeed recognized what has an apparent correspondence to the Christian Trinity, in the three great powers,—Space, the Earth, and Humanity.

his reverence. He traced no moral purpose in nature; and therefore we cannot be surprised that for him man was higher, more deserving of esteem and veneration than any power, knowable or unknowable, to which Humanity owes its origin and also the circumstances by which, upon this planet, the race of men has been encompassed.

In the view of the Christian, Positivism is atheism and idolatry; atheism, because denying the existence and rule of a living and personal, an almighty and righteous, a moral and supreme Ruler; idolatry, because substituting for the Object of worship whom Christians apprehend by faith, either an abstraction of the understanding, or else concrete, actual, and finite beings coming within the range of perception. Whilst, then, we can sympathize with the indignant and eloquent protests which the representatives of Positivism now and again utter when Secularism and Agnosticism outrage by their cynical negations the best feelings of mankind, we cannot be misled by our sentiments into the admission that the Religion of Humanity is properly entitled to the name of a religion,—since, if it is not without a *cultus*, it is without a revelation, without a law, without a gospel, without a God.

As denying a living God, it is atheistic.

As worshipping the creature instead of the Creator, it is idolatrous.

In exalting the human race to the highest position of honour and of reverence, the Positivists virtually affirm that no intelligence or virtue higher

Positivists
confine their
regard and
reverence to
finite and
imperfect
beings.

than the human can be known to us. They do not indeed pretend that man is the only rational and moral being in the universe. Professing to concern themselves only with what comes within the range of observation, they are content to recognise the existence of the human race and the manifestation in its best representatives of qualities higher than are discernible elsewhere. They refuse to consider the question whether the phenomena of the physical universe and the existence of conscious beings, involve or suggest a superhuman Power. Regarding this as a question which our intellect is unable to answer, they urge that, of what we really know, the human qualities—intellectual and moral—are most deserving of that admiration which is the nearest approach to worship allowed by their system.

We cannot
consent to
render to
man what
is due to
God alone.

Now this proceeding cannot be witnessed without deep grief, without strenuous protest. It is not in our nature to shut our eyes to the evidences of a superior—a supreme Power presiding over the world, and revealing and exercising the attributes of reason, righteousness, and benevolence—attributes which properly and necessarily belong to a Person, a Divine Person. It is admitted that man is not supreme, that he is no explanation of his own existence, or of the existence of the material universe. Yet we are urged to concentrate our veneration and devotion upon man. This is a

demand with which our reason will not suffer us to comply. We cannot but look higher than to our fellow-creatures. We cannot but ask whether there is not sufficient evidence of the existence of a Creator, with glorious moral attributes. We cannot but withhold from the manifold imperfections of man the homage we are ready to yield to the infinite perfections of God.

Comte's hostility to every form of religion which acknowledges a Divine Ruler of the world, is decided and undisguised. The servants of humanity, in claiming as their due the general direction of this world

Comte was hostile to every form of Theism, to Monotheism as to other forms.

“exclude, once for all, from political supremacy, all the different servants of God—Catholic, Protestant, or Deist—as being at once behindhand and a cause of disturbance.”¹

Monotheism, which in the East assumes the form of Mohammedanism, and in the West that of Christianity,—forms mutually hostile and irreconcilable,—must, in Comte's judgment, abandon its pretensions, and must submit to be fused and superseded by the religion of the future, the religion of Positivism, of Humanity.

It has been maintained, by Strauss and by many of his English disciples, that we may reject Christianity and yet may retain religion. But facts do not favour this contention. Those who repudiate the Religion of the New Testament may in doing so resolve that they will substitute

¹ *Catechism*, Preface, p. 1.

The impossibility of rejecting Christianity and yet retaining a Religion.

To abandon Christianity for Positivism is to fall into Atheism.

for it some other religion, more rational and credible as they think,—but still a religion. But experience shows how slender a hold such a resolution has upon the mind of the infidel. That Auguste Comte was sincere in his profession, that for him religion was of supreme importance, we do not question. But what are the facts with regard to his followers? It is well known that many who regard the founder of Positivism as one of the greatest of philosophers have no sympathy with his religious views, but regard them as signs of his utter dotage! They see no consistency between the Positivism which teaches that exact science is man's only intellectual possession, and the position to which, in his later days, Comte exalted the emotions of man, the precepts of morality, and the mysterious observances of religion. Such was the view taken by M. Littré in France and by Mr. G. H. Lewes in this country. The course of human events leads us to the conclusion, that, to abandon Christianity for Positivism, is nothing else than to abandon Theism for Atheism.

VIII.

HUMANITY IS NEITHER AN INTELLIGIBLE NOR A WORTHY OBJECT OF WORSHIP.

WHILST Christianity sets before us a Deity whose moral attributes, and especially whose

moral perfections, are so superior to our own, that it is obviously just that, if He exist, He should receive our adoration and homage,—Comte and his followers have nothing higher to offer us, as the object of our worship, than is to be found in our own human nature and qualities. Religious sentiment is to be directed towards men and women, with ordinary human characteristics. This amounts to nothing very different from the worship of ourselves!

The worship of humanity is virtually the worship of self.

Let us try to understand what is that Humanity which the Comtists propose as the Deity of the future and more enlightened generations of worshippers. When we make an attempt at definiteness, we find ourselves very much at a loss to know what we are to revere,—to what we are to offer our prayers. Strictly speaking, humanity is an abstraction, a notion under which we gather together those qualities which distinguish men from brutes. No doubt we shall be told to bring together just those attributes which command our respect or win our love. Still, after all, it is an abstraction,—with no existence outside our own thoughts. And how can we worship an abstraction? How can we trust, love, and serve an abstraction? Upon considering the Comtist deity, Dr. Mark Pattison came to the conclusion that by humanity we can only understand

The Humanity which the Comtists would put in the place of God has no existence save as a conception of our own minds.

“A mere word, an abstract term, the pure creation of the

logical faculty, of which we know that it never was or can be a real entity."¹

The utter unreality of the "being" thus offered as a substitute for the living God.

Others than Christian advocates have rejected with contempt or ridicule the proposal to set up Humanity as a God. Professor Huxley, satirizing the ecclesiastical pretensions of the founder of the Positivist religion, says:—

"Great was my perplexity, not to say disappointment, as I followed the progress of this mighty son of earth, in his work of reconstruction. Undoubtedly *Dieu* [God] disappeared, but the *Nouveau Grand-ître Suprême* [the new, the Supreme great Being], a gigantic fetich, turned out brand-new by M. Comte's own hands, reigned in his stead."²

Similarly, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, comparing Mr. Herbert Spencer's Agnosticism with Mr. Frederic Harrison's Positivist Religion, has said with point and with impartial severity:—

"Humanity with a capital H is neither better nor worse fitted to be a god, than the unknowable with a capital U."³

Probably the Positivists worship individual human beings, dead or living.

In fact, it is necessary, in order that Humanity may have some plausibility as an object of worship, to personify the idea. When the French atheists deified the "Reason," which they designed to replace the Christian God, they personified the attribute Reason, representing it in the person of a woman, whose character and reputation were not such as to inspire the respect of the virtuous. And the Comtists, there can be no doubt, instead

¹ *Contemporary Review*, March, 1876. ² *Lay Sermons*, p. 148.

³ *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1884.

of adoring the abstraction Humanity, actually picture to themselves certain historical personages who command their admiration, and make, now this, now that, hero, saint, or sage, the object of their veneration.

Apart from such personification it does not seem consistent with reason and common-sense to worship Humanity. As well might we attempt to revere and love Mr. Matthew Arnold's "stream of tendency, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." When Mr. Harrison affirms that "the sum of human effort in thought and act forms a current of power," we admit the justice of the statement, and the felicity of the figure. But when he proceeds to describe Humanity as "a composite human power," and, in his endeavour to be more definite, as "a being, an organism with every quality of organic life,"¹ we resent the transition from agreeable rhetoric to misty and misleading philosophy. Much of the language which the preacher of Positivism employs might indeed justly be applied to that Being who made man in His own image. Thus he speaks of

It seems scarcely possible to worship an abstraction.

"the ever present sense of a superior power controlling our lives, itself endowed with sympathies kindred to our own."

He adds:—

"The entire system of Positive belief points to the existence of a single dominant power, whose real and incontestable

¹ *Contemporary Review*, December, 1875.

attributes appeal directly to the affections, in no less measure than they appeal directly to the intellect."

Language is used by Positivists which would be appropriate if applied to God, but is meaningless if applied to Humanity.

Such language as this would be most appropriate from a Theist believing in a living, conscious, personal Ruler and Father of men. But it is mere inflated rhetoric in the mouth of a thinker who believes in no conscious and personal Power superior to what is human, and who regards the dead of former generations as the sovereigns who rule our spirits and deserve our adoration.

Sober reason cannot but acknowledge that the bulk of our fellow-creatures, living and dead, are very partially deserving of our admiration, and have no claim upon that religious veneration, which is appropriately rendered to a Being with moral perfections. Human virtues have existed in all states of society, but in how few characters have these virtues been impressively preponderant! We owe to our ancestors and predecessors much of good influence; but alas! not a little of evil. Reverence and gratitude may justly be felt towards some whose example has been found elevating and inspiring. But, on the other hand, there have been those of whose influence over ourselves we can think only with regret, even it may be with loathing and with shame.

Men, generally speaking, have deserved a very qualified admiration; and few have deserved ordinary reverence.

If a selection is to be made of certain individuals who shall typify the true Humanity, who is to make such a selection, and upon what principle?

Are we to worship the soldier or the saint, the emperor or the martyr, the missionary, the sage, or the poet? The type of character to this day admired by the multitude is often far from being such as would be approved by the intellectual, or the religious. Comte was aware of the difficulty in attempting to define the duly adorable Humanity: he was not successful in overcoming the difficulty. The "Calendar" is indeed a marvellous work, but it is noticeable that among its 500 names there do not occur any of those which are connected with the uprising of the enlightened intellect, the quickened heart of mankind against mediæval superstition. In vain do we look for such names as Wyclif, Savonarola, John Huss, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zwingle, Knox, Latimer. That such names are "conspicuous by their absence," is what we should expect, knowing Comte's prejudices against Protestantism. Whoever shall select the typical names will of necessity set before us only a partial representation of humanity. Whether the choice be arbitrary or rational, whether it be according to personal preference or to general conscience, the result cannot be other than unsatisfactory. The author of Positivism endeavoured to be at once comprehensive and eclectic.

Is a selection of heroes and saints, suitable for worship, to be made?

If so, who shall make the selection?

Comte unfairly excludes from his calendar many of the noblest, purest, and most useful of men.

"Humanity is not composed of all individuals or groups of men, past, present, and future, taken indiscriminately. The new great Being is formed by the co-operation only of such existences as are of a kindred nature with itself; excluding such

as have proved only a burden to the human race. It is on this ground that we regard Humanity as composed essentially of the dead.”¹

Either the worshipper or the priest must by selection virtually determine and create the object of worship.

It is then admitted that Humanity as a whole, is not a suitable object of reverence and worship. The unworthy members of the race—the vast majority—must be put aside, and the choicest spirits, the few elect and precious, must be set apart and placed within the shrine for adoration. Now, upon what principle, by what faculty, by whose authority, shall that part of humanity be selected, to whom worship shall be offered? Comte himself acknowledged that no arbitrary principle is to be admitted, that the worthless and useless must be deliberately eliminated, and that the gold of humanity, liberated from the dross, must be praised and honoured as God. This is as much as to determine that either the worshipper or the priest must *make his God*, and must do this in the exercise of his own discrimination and judgment.

The Comtist, like the Papal Calendar, distracts the mind by the multiplicity of the saints whose claims it presents.

A practical difficulty in the so-called “Religion of Humanity,” arises from the multitude of objects proposed for worship. The Comtist calendar is crowded with names,—names of men illustrious in every field of research and achievement. The aim of its author was to present a kind of synopsis of humanity, and in this he may be credited with having partially succeeded. The prototype of this

¹ *Positive Polity*, vol. I., p. 333.

calendar is evidently the ecclesiastical calendar comprising the saints who have been canonized, in the course of successive centuries, by the Church of Rome. Let this diversity be compared with the unity of the object of worship revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Papal and the Positivist worship are alike distracting to the mind; all that can be said in their favour is this: that every character is sure to find something congenial in the multiplicity which is thus approved by worldly wisdom. Inconsistent and opposite qualities are alike honoured. On the other hand, the Bible exhibits One only and supreme object of veneration in the Divine Creator, moral Governor, and Redeemer, in whom no moral imperfection is to be found, and who combines in Himself all moral excellence. The worship of the living God brings into one focus all the spiritual aspirations of man, and leaves no room for aught to be added.

The unity of the object of Christian worship exhibited in contrast to this diversity.

The immediate object of human worship is represented by Comte as being woman, especially in the person of mother, wife, and daughter. But worship must be of that which is above the worshipper. What guarantee is there that the worship of woman will be, in all or in most cases, the worship of the superior? It is not every man who can look up to his feminine relatives as models of human excellence, far less as incarnations of

Woman, however admirable, is not a fitting object of religious worship.

Divine glory. It is not every woman whose worship will elevate her worshippers. Probably there may be in the world more very bad men than very bad women. But it is questionable whether the highest and finest models of moral excellence are to be found in the female sex. The worshipper of woman will, to a sensible man of experience, appear to be worshipping the creation of his own imagination, coloured by the soft delusive light of sentiment.

Woman-worship is indicative of sentimentality rather than of reason.

It is mainly to the religion of our Lord Christ that woman owes her elevation to her proper and Divinely appointed position in human society. The contrast between the regard in which women were held, and are still held, in unchristian communities, and the regard in which they are held where the Redeemer of our humanity bears rule, is striking indeed. But reasonable persons will not be blind to that tendency to sentimentalism, which is observable in religious society generally, and which is referable to a deep-seated principle in human nature. The worship of the Virgin Mary, so long and so extensively practised in Roman Catholic communities, however it may have been originally suggested by heathen usages, owes its popularity mainly to the power of sentimentality; and the Positivist doctrine concerning the worship of women, though traceable to Comte's personal temperament and experience, lays hold

upon a tendency of human nature which will not be, and ought not to be eradicated, but which certainly needs to be governed and controlled. It is not derogatory to women to say that, notwithstanding all their excellences and all their charms, they are but human; and that, because they are human, they are "compassed with infirmity," and are unsuitable as objects of supreme admiration and unqualified praise. The just object of religious veneration and service is a Being who combines in His character, and who transcends, the excellences which are deemed distinctively masculine and those which are deemed distinctively feminine. The inferiority of the worship of woman to the worship of God, is apparent to every one who believes that all human virtue is but the glimmering emanation from the goodness which is uncreated, eternal, and Divine.

The moral excellence of God transcends the highest human goodness, both masculine and feminine.

IX.

THE INCONSISTENCY OF POSITIVISM WITH TRUE PRAYER.

NOTHING is more obviously inadmissible than the Comtist teaching upon prayer. The founder of the "Religion of Humanity," and those of his followers who sympathize with the religious part of his teaching, lay the greatest stress upon the duty of devotion, and encourage direct addresses

Comtists offer prayer to the human race.

Such prayer is irrational, for it does not come before those to whom it is addressed.

On the other hand, prayer to the Creator and Saviour of mankind is just and elevating.

to the "Great Being," *i.e.*, to the human race as a whole. That this Deity is unconscious, is incapable of hearing the cry of suppliants, is neither pleased with honour rendered nor able to confer favours implored: this is unquestionable. We contend that prayer to such a Deity is irrational and meaningless. Better no prayer at all than that form of prayer which alone can be presented to "Humanity;" for the prayerless may be convinced of sin, whilst those who fancy that they pray when they invoke a shadow, an abstraction, a name, are certainly deluding and deceiving themselves.

The prayer which is enjoined and exemplified in Holy Writ is of a very different kind from any recommended by the Comtists. Christian prayer is offered to a Being personal, conscious, able by His very nature, disposed by His moral attributes, and pledged by His faithfulness, to enter into with sympathy, and to consider with wise kindness, the desires and requests of His people. That in saying thus much concerning God, we are making use of language based upon human experience, and adapted to human comprehension, we admit; but the language, though imperfect, is not unwarranted or misleading. Man is declared by the inspired apostle to be "the image and glory of God." Prayer is then offered by spiritual natures to that eternal and blessed Being who has made men capable of knowing, trusting, loving, and serving

Him. The Positivist theory forbids our attempting to conceive an almighty Author of our individual existence, an almighty Sovereign of our race; and enjoins upon us the adoration of those who at the best are the "image," and the imperfect image, of the Infinitely Excellent. It seems to us, as Christians, more reasonable to believe that God "is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him." We have faith in One who, whilst "one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh," abides unchanged and unchangeable, who includes in His own person in glorious perfection those moral attributes which awaken our admiration, even when dimly reflected in the character of His creatures and subjects. As the Source of wisdom and goodness this Being may reasonably be invoked and entreated in prayer. But with regard to the memorable and illustrious dead, we cannot but perceive that what good it was in their power to do they have already done; they have said all that it was given them to utter of inspiration and of counsel; they have left their example and their influence behind, as a precious legacy to their successors. Commemorate their virtues we may and will; implore their aid we cannot; the one is the dictate of gratitude, the other would be the proof of infatuation. In fact the prayer of the Positivist is simply an unconscious witness to the heart's deep need, and an

Gratitude and reverence are within measure due to our fellow-men.

But unbounded adoration and affection are due to God our Saviour.

Sad is the case of those who must pray, but who are ignorant of the true and proper object of prayer.

It is objected by Positivists that the prayers of Christians are selfish.

inarticulate acknowledgment of the heart's yet deeper despair. Pray we must; but to whom shall he pray, for whom no God in His all-wise but inscrutable counsel sways the destinies of the nations, and in tenderness as mysterious watches over the child's uncertain steps? There remains for him nothing but the invocation of human pity and human helpfulness. Alas! for those who are doomed to experience how vain is the help of man, and who yet know not that God is "nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth."¹

It is often urged by Positivists that the prayers of Christians are selfish, whilst their own devotions do not aim at securing personal advantages, but take the form of communion with and of aspiration towards the highest good. Now we contend that meditation upon moral excellence is more real and helpful in the case of those who believe in that excellence as eternally distinguishing the Being who is interested in and who presides over human affairs, and who is Himself concerned that His rational creatures should themselves partake and exhibit it. Whatever reflex advantages prayer to Humanity secures to the Positivist worshipper, are certainly enjoyed by the Christian. And the Christian reaps in his own heart and life the benefits of answered prayer. It is a great mistake

¹ Psalm cxlv. 18.

to suppose that to ask for, and to use means for obtaining blessings for ourselves, is the exercise of a selfish spirit. Selfishness is the habit of seeking good for ourselves without regard for others, at the expense of others, and with a view rather to our own enjoyment than with a view to the promotion of the welfare of mankind and the glory of God. If the Christian's prayer is selfish, then in the view of the enlightened and spiritual, it ceases in so far to be prayer at all. The essence of prayer is submission to the Divine Will, that Will which is the expression of righteousness, holiness, and benevolence. That God's kingdom may in some measure come through our agency, that God's glory may in some measure be promoted by our life,—this is the supreme and constant desire and hope of the Christian, and it is this that he embodies in his daily supplications. That the dross of human earthliness mingles with the fine gold of devotion, we all know from sad experience; but this—however the Comtist may be offended by the explanation—is because there is in our prayers too much of man, and not enough of God.

Prayer for the worshipper's own spiritual improvement and welfare, is not selfish.

The Christian is bound to seek, above all things, the glory of his God and Saviour.

X.

THE MORAL AUTHORITY OF THE RELIGION OF
HUMANITY IS INSUFFICIENT TO GUIDE AND
GOVERN THE LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS AND
COMMUNITIES.

Religion
should not
only reveal
truth, but
enjoin law,
and exercise
authority.

By common consent, religion, that it may deserve acceptance, must offer to men, not only a system of doctrines to be believed, but a law to be obeyed, with motives and sanctions sufficient, in some measure, to ensure the obedience enjoined. It is not an ornament to be worn, but a force to be obeyed. Mankind needs a religion that will "work," that will deal with a wilful, rebellious nature, with a life abounding in temptation, with a society prone to inflame passion and to enervate virtue. Religion, if it is to prove suitable for man, as man is, must come to him as to a sinner, must bring a remedy for man's moral disorder, succour for man's moral weakness, control for man's moral waywardness. It must not only reveal truth; it must impose and enforce law.

What shall
be the
rule of
social life?

The
Christian
and the
Comtist
answers
to this
question.

In Comte's view, the Christian rule of social life, *Love your neighbour as yourself*, is a rule which distinctly sanctions egoism; and in *the love of God*—the ground of the rule—he finds a direct stimulus to egoism. He proposes instead, the formula, *Live for others*; but he qualifies this by

permitting men to gratify their personal instincts, with the view of fitting themselves to be better servants of humanity.¹

The word "altruism" has been adopted into our language from the French tongue, which owes it to the inventive genius of Comte.² It is opposed to "egoism," and signifies the principle according to which a man lives, not for his own pleasure or good, but for the pleasure or good of others.

The
"Religion
of Human-
ity" enjoins
"Altruism."

Comte considered that he was the inaugurator of a new social era, a new social life. If there was one practical precept more frequently reiterated by him than another, it was that embodied in the above formula, "Live for others." The motto which the disciples have adopted from their master, and which they prefix to their publications, is,

The
Comtean
Motto.

"Love as our principle, Order as our basis, Progress as our end."

The true interpretation of altruism includes not merely a regard for our fellow-men, but a distinct ignoring of our Creator. It would be easy to show that a community in which every member of society should lose all thought and renounce all care of himself, would become utterly disorganized. Comte was very well aware of this; he knew that it is by the due combination of prudence with benevolence that human well-being

The
necessity of
combining
prudence
and
benevolence

¹ *Catechism*, p. 313.

² The word should have been "alienism," but "altruism" is now established by its adoption by Mr. Herbert Spencer and other well-known writers.

The
superiority
of the
Christian
over the
Comtist
law.

is secured. His vanity led him to exalt his own moral axioms above those accepted in Christendom. Yet an impartial student of religion and of morals cannot but regard the Christian law as superior to that of Comte. "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . and thy neighbour as thyself,*" is a wise and practical principle of human conduct; it presumes as natural and right a regard to our own interest, but directs us to make this regard the measure of our interest in our fellow-men. Eighteen centuries before Comte's day, Christ had inculcated the duty of unselfishness and benevolence. But whilst Comtism relies only upon the feeling of human community and sympathy as the motive power to compliance with its law, Christianity derives the love of man from the love of God, and supplies in the revelation of Divine compassion and mercy the spiritual impulse which is mighty to prompt man to benevolence. And experience has shown that there is no motive so efficacious to secure the prevalence of mutual love and helpfulness, as that arising from the pity of the heavenly Father and the sacrifice of the Divine Redeemer. He who is led by the faith he holds to cherish love to God feels the force of the admonition that, loving God, he shall love his brother also.

The
superiority
of the
Christian
motive.

With regard to the other clauses of the Positivist motto, it may be said that their unsatisfactory character is apparent at first sight, and that it is wonder-

ful how thoughtful men should accept them and glory in them. “Order as our basis, Progress as our end.”

Comte distrusted all political revolution, and was reactionary in his approval of strong government.

The Comtist motto criticised.

His veneration for authority was such as to verge upon the admiration of absolutism. The basis of “order” was for him something very different from the mutual respect which men should cherish for one another’s rights. And how can “progress” be regarded as the “end”? The language contradicts itself; for progress should be towards an end. Progress towards a good end is a desirable thing; the all-important question, which Comte does not answer, is this, In what direction, towards what goal, is progress to be made? There is progress towards anarchy and atheism; and there is progress towards peace, freedom, righteousness, and piety. If the first be deemed retrogression rather than progress, this should be stated, and the true end should be defined. There is none of this

“Progress” is no proper “end.”

vagueness in the prospect which is opened up, in the path which is prescribed, by the Christian revelation. The end there represented as worthy of all human effort and sacrifice, is not mere progress, it is the reign of God, *i.e.*, the prevalence of justice and benevolence among men, based upon faith in a perfect spiritual Ruler and Saviour, and introductory to the future and heavenly glory, to the city and the kingdom of God Himself.

The question is: to what end shall we seek to make progress?

The almost
 truisms of
 Positivism
 are for the
 most part
 truisms, and
 in no
 sense
 peculiar
 to the
 system.

With these
 should be
 contrasted
 the deeply
 founded
 laws of the
 Christian
 Revelation.

The divine
 and
 practical
 power of
 Christianity.

The mottoes which have been so much vaunted by Positivists, *e.g.*, Live for others! Live openly! Let the strong devote themselves to the weak, and let the weak venerate the strong! The man must support the woman! etc., are very good as far as they go. But they are no revelations of Comtism. They are ethical truisms, and, what is of more importance, such precepts do not meet the necessities of human life. The world is not governed by mottoes. Christianity propounds a law, as the expression alike of the reason and the righteous will of the Author and Ruler of the universe. Christianity reveals a future life, and thus adds to the range and the solemnity of the moral outlook of mankind. Christianity makes known the interest of the Supreme Lord and Father of men in their spiritual state, His displeasure with sin, His desire to pardon, to purify, to bless. Christianity brings to bear upon the heart and conscience of human beings the mighty motive of love, enforced by gratitude and by hope; so that this motive becomes the spring of a new moral life, of a cheerful and enthusiastic obedience. Christianity reveals an all-perfect example, the example of Christ, and at the same time supplies needed power, the power of the Holy Spirit. In all this we have something very different from mottoes; we have principles whose efficient power is proved by ample experience. Positivism has no resources to

compare with these, no resources adequate to the necessities of the case. The witness of Sir J. F. Stephen, himself unfriendly to Christianity and apparently to all religion, may be accepted to the principle, supported by human experience, that the only religion which will work "must be founded upon a supernatural basis believed to be true."¹

A supernatural basis necessary for religion and provided in Christianity.

XI.

"SUBJECTIVE" IMMORTALITY IS A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR THE PERSONAL IMMORTALITY REVEALED BY CHRISTIANITY.

THE Positivist teaching with regard to immortality is, when compared with the teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles, very defective and unsatisfying. Whatever there is in it sound and good is equally the property of the Christian, who is the possessor at the same time of a glorious hope to which the Positivist is a stranger. Comte held that, inasmuch as the social existence of man consists in the continuous succession of the generations, the living are of necessity always under the government of the dead; conscious existence ceases at death, and each true servant of humanity, upon quitting this life, "exists only in the heart and intellect of others."

Comte's view of immortality is that it consists in the perpetuation of influence after death.

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1884.

“This is the noble immortality, necessarily disconnected with the body, which Positivism allows the human soul. It preserves this valuable term—soul—to stand for the whole of our intellectual and moral functions, without involving any allusion to some supposed entity answering to the name.”¹

Comte gives no hope of conscious and happy existence after this life.

Death dissipates man's bodily structure into its component elements; and, since the soul, according to Positivism, is but the function of organised matter, it ceases to be when the organism ceases to live. But the Comtist comforts himself with the assurance that a useful, devoted, and unselfish life cannot be without influence upon the future of that race which to him is the one object of supreme interest and affection. The doctrine offers no prospect of a life after death, to animate the self-denying toiler with the vision of fruit not to be reaped on earth,—to cheer the sufferer with the anticipation of relief and of repose. But it offers compensation for this loss in the assurance that every generation that does its work faithfully confers priceless benefits upon the generations which follow. Thus the individual may be said, when he has lost his personal existence, to live afresh in the higher and happier life of those who come after him, and who inherit the fruit of his work and sacrifice. A man, we are told, will prove himself more noble and less selfish, in cheerfully renouncing all thought, all desire, of personal, conscious immortality, when he has the conviction that his

He represents it as a high and unselfish aim to live for the benefit of posterity.

¹ *Catechism*, p. 77.

best purposes will be realised, and his best endeavours rewarded, in the purer and richer life of his successors.

“The old objective immortality,” said Comte, “could never clear itself of the egoistic, or selfish, character.”¹

Let, then, this view of immortality be compared with the prospect revealed in the Scriptures, and cherished by every Christian.

There is nothing peculiar to Positivism in the belief that a good man's work endures after he himself has gone; that in this sense he lives on in the life of those who succeed him. This kind of immortality—if it may be so called—is the property of Comtist and of Christian alike; and it is very strange that it should be claimed by the former as his special revelation and possession. The consolation of contributing to the future well-being of humanity, is a just and worthy and real consolation to him who toils and suffers and waits, who seeks the good of his fellow-men, and often seeks it in weariness and amidst many discouragements and disappointments. The future of humanity is, however, a very different thing to the Christian and to the Positivist. To the former, mankind appears to occupy this earth for a period, as a tribe of sojourners or pilgrims seeking, and not in vain, a better country elsewhere. To the latter, mankind appears to have this earth as

The prospect of leaving good influence behind is common to the Christian with the Comtist.

A man's work abides, though the worker goes to his rest.

¹ *Catechism*, Preface, p. 33.

its possession and its one and only home. The thoughtful man, however, will not forget that the race is no more immortal than the individual. He who believes in a future life may reasonably expect a golden and imperishable harvest in eternity. There is no limit, no end, to the beneficial results of a virtuous and self-denying course on earth. The new heaven and the new earth shall be the scene, and eternity shall afford the unlimited opportunity, of progress and of blessedness. But to the Positivist no such prospect opens up; to him the future has no such recompense, no such compensation in store. What then has he to look forward to? The development of earthly society, the prevalence among men of peace and amity, of plenty, of culture, of order. But the Positivist, as a man of science, knows that this planet will cease to be the dwelling-place of man, that our race will perish from off the earth. And this means *for him* the blankness of annihilation. To his apprehension, all shall in the future be as if knowledge and virtue and self-denial had never been!

Positivism contemplates the extinction of the human race, body and soul, and the consequent annihilation of every good man's work.

Christianity opens up a boundless prospect of results as the harvest of toil.

The Christian has another advantage over the Positivist. Assured that his victorious Redeemer has "abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel," he has no gloomy expectation of extinction, but a bright hope of personal life in closer communion with the

ever-living God. This prospect he prizes—as he prizes the present life—not for an unworthy and merely selfish reason,—not as the prospect of pleasure made perpetual; but because there is thus opened up to him a future of unceasing devotion to the service of Him who is the highest and the best, and who has the first claim upon the love, the praise, the consecrated and loyal devotion of His people. The Master lives, and therefore the servant, the disciple, shall live also. The relation gives dignity and blessedness to the prospect of personal immortality. And with the evidence upon which this prospect rests, the Christian is abundantly and most reasonably satisfied.

In addition, Christianity assures us of that, of which Positivism gives no expectation, personal and conscious immortality.

XII.

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY, AND THE RELIGION OF CHRIST.

IF these rival claimants to man's spiritual loyalty are to be compared, the comparison must not be between Positivism and such Christianity as Comte's wayward and prejudiced fancy constructed for the purpose of demolishing it. The appeal of Christ's followers and friends is to Christ's Word. It is necessary to refer to some of Comte's misconceptions and misrepresentations of our religion, for they have been too generally

Comte's misrepresentations of the religion of Christ.

accepted by those who know little at first hand of the Inspired Volume.

Comte regarded Christianity as only concerned with the unseen; whereas the Incarnate Son of God makes the invisible visible.

Comte's enmity towards Christianity was inspired, partly by a dislike to its fundamental revelation of a superhuman Being, the Ruler of the universe, and partly by a misunderstanding of the character of our religion. He objected to it, because in his view it represented

"perfection as consisting in an entire concentration upon heavenly objects;"

He looked on Christianity as opposed to benevolence; whereas sin is a departure from the ideal nature which comprises love.

an objection which overlooks the great Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, a doctrine which makes it possible for us to realize, and so to admire and revere, the moral attributes of the Supreme as manifested under the conditions of a human character and a human life. He condemned

"a morality which proclaims that the benevolent sentiments are foreign to our nature;"

He thought that Scripture treated labour as in itself a curse; whereas it is sin which renders labour a penalty.

whereas the truth is that the Scriptures represent malice and hatred as forms of sin, and sin as a departure from the proper and Divinely constituted nature of man. He complained that Christianity

"so little understands the dignity of labour as to refer its origin to a Divine curse;"

which is in contradiction to the Biblical statement that the Creator placed unfallen Adam in the garden "to dress it and to keep it," and that his sin was the occasion not of labour in itself being cursed, but of labour in the new conditions that

arose partaking of the penalties attaching to man's disobedience. He describes our religion

“as putting forward woman as the source of all evil ;

whereas the narrative in Genesis represents the man as equally guilty with the woman in violating Divine law, whilst no book in the world has done so much as the Bible to elevate the position of woman, and to strengthen her moral influence amongst mankind. Comte held that Christians

Revelation does not regard woman as the source of all evil. In the fall, man and woman were both guilty, and Christianity has done much to elevate woman.

“pursue no good, however trifling, but from the hope of an infinite reward, or from the fear of an eternal punishment,” thus “proving their heart to be as degraded as their intellect.”

In this misrepresentation the master has been commonly followed by his disciples. Yet both Old and New Testament rely upon the love, the gratitude, the spiritual sympathy, cherished towards the God and Saviour of mankind by those who accept the message of Divine authority and mercy, as the most powerful motives to well-doing. A regard to personal welfare and happiness, though not the highest principle of obedience, is yet a lawful and proper principle, and it is not the fault of true religion that many of its expositors have lost sight of the purest and best motives, and have laid an undue stress upon those which have right only to a subordinate place. No system of morality, intended for men as they are, can al-

Hope and fear are not the main motives to Christian faith and obedience. Love and gratitude towards a Divine Saviour are the all constraining power of the Christian life.

together dispense with the consideration of the consequences of actions. But the more Christians are penetrated with the distinctively Christian spirit, the less will they act aright from motives of hope and of fear, the more will they be actuated by the impulses of duty, of loyalty, and of love.

The defects and errors involved in the principles of the Positivist system.

Positivism cannot clearly distinguish between the worshipper and the Deity, for both alike are human. The object of adoration does not actually exist; it has had a partial existence in the past, it is to have a completer existence in the future. Meanwhile the devotee is to assist in the growth, the construction of his god.

Positivism discerns in man no truly spiritual nature. The phenomenal only can be known, and the phenomenal has no lasting existence. All that is human is physical, mortal, perishable.

Positivism recognizes no law independent of human origin, no eternal, unchangeable government and authority, superior to the generations of mankind which come and which pass away. Humanity is making a law as it is making a God; and that which is made is inferior to its maker.

Positivism knows nothing of sin; for it recognises in man no Divine image which has been defaced, it admits of no Divine standard from which man has deflected, it knows no Divine authority which has been defied. Upon vice and crime, indeed, it looks with detestation, as injurious

to the happiness of the individual and to the peace and order of society. But *sin* it is from its very position and principles unable to comprehend; for *sin* is against God, and the “Religion of Humanity” ignores and denies God. If man owes no allegiance to a Supreme Power, he cannot rebel.

Positivism is ignorant of redemption; for if there is no *sin*, there can be no need and no possibility of salvation. On the assumption that God is not, the mercy, the pity, the love,—which Christians believe have provided a Saviour,—vanish and become mere fancies and illusions. For the Positivist there can be no such thing as Divine forgiveness, as restoration to Divine favour, as participation in Divine life.

Depriving mankind of the Redeemer and of the blessed fruits of His redemption, the system now under discussion leaves the world poor, desolate, and hopeless indeed!

Positivism unfolds no reason, no substantial and sufficient motive for a virtuous life. There is no Divine purpose, and no imperishable aim to be sought and secured by self-denial and beneficence. The alternative in human conduct is simply between the temporary happiness of one person and that of another, and it is not clear why the agent should prefer another’s happiness to his own.

Positivism restricts our regards within the horizon of earth and of time, *i.e.*, such a period as com-

It mis-
represents
both God
and man;
it abolishes
Divine law;
it ignores
human sin;
it deprives
us of the
great
salvation;
it weakens
the motives
to virtue;
it limits our
prospects to
this present
life.

prises man's tenancy of this perishable planet. Beyond, it offers no prospect for either the individual or the race; no scope for future recompense, retribution, or development.

In every respect the Religion of Christ has advantage over the so-called religion of Humanity.

Does Christianity take a less noble view than Positivism of human nature, as created by God, and as re-created in Christ by the Spirit of God? On the contrary, the Scriptures assure us that "God created man *in His own image*," and "made him *but little lower than God*,"¹ that "there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Christianity confers upon our nature the highest honour, for its central truth is that the eternal Word became "*the Son of Man*," that He might redeem and save the nature which He deigned to share.

In its view of human nature.

In its view of morality, and of man's moral and spiritual necessities.

Does Christianity come short of Positivism in its view of the highest law of righteousness, the highest possibilities of moral character, the highest motives to self-denial, to true service? On the contrary, the Bible reveals to us in God the attributes whose harmonious action constitutes moral goodness, and the Being who, as the Almighty and Eternal Ruler, secures the final triumph of the cause of righteousness. And the Bible reveals to us in Christ the Divine Saviour, whose cross is the condemnation of sin and the salvation of the sinner, whose love

In its provision of salvation.

¹ Revised Version.

is the principle, and whose Spirit is the power of the new and higher life of humanity.

Does Christianity take a less inspiring and satisfying view than Positivism of the prospects of humanity? On the contrary, it bids us look forward to the time when it shall be said, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." The "Religion of Humanity" may promise the virtuous and the wise a name in the Comtist calendar, a niche in the Positivist temple; but Christianity permits us to believe of the sainted and the glorified that "they are equal unto the angels, and are sons of God," and encourages the devout and faithful to breathe to Heaven the aspiration, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." The brightest hope of the Positivist is in the spread of civilisation, the reign of order, and the prevalence of peace on earth. In this hope the Christian joins. But the time shall come when the earth and the heavens shall be rolled up as a mantle, and shall be changed as a garment. With that time, in the gloomy apprehension of the Positivist, shall perish and pass away, together with this material dwelling-place, those natures that make it their brief, their only home; and man, with all his works and all his knowledge, and all his virtues, shall be swept into eternal oblivion. But with that time, according to

In its anticipation of the future of Humanity even on earth.

The limited horizon of Positivism.

The glorious
revelation
which
Christianity
gives of the
everlasting
destiny of
the saved.

the strong and well-founded hope of the Christian, shall appear "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" and then shall be fulfilled the prayer offered for His people by Him who is the Head of the new and immortal humanity, "Father, I will that where I am they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."



THE
ETHICS OF EVOLUTION
EXAMINED

BY THE
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Argument of the Tract.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER taken as the exponent of the Ethics of Evolution. His statement of the question. The new aspect given to Ethics by Evolution. Criticism of Mr. Spencer's account of the genesis of moral intuition. It fails to account for the influence of education, and for the inheritance of mankind embodied in literature. Man is a being possessed of freedom, and any view of morality must have regard to this fact. Mr. Spencer's use of words of different moral import as if they were synonymous. Beneficial, good, pleasurable, are identified by him, as also are detrimental, bad, painful. Fallacy involved in this procedure. Impossibility of deducing laws of conduct from laws of life and conditions of existence. Criteria of moral conduct. Evolved conduct may be good or evil. Industrialism affords no criterion of the morality of conduct. Moral obligation. Veracity as the test whereby we may try the validity of the hypothesis of the Ethics of Evolution. Impossibility of accounting for the binding obligation to be truthful on any Utilitarian hypothesis. Mr. Spencer's prophecy that "the element in the moral consciousness which is expressed by the word obligation will disappear." Criticism of it. Mr. Spencer's distinction between absolute and relative Ethics misleading. Failure of Evolutionary Ethics to afford guidance to man. Christ's life and teaching the sure guide of man to real moral conduct. **Christian Ethics the only scientific Ethics.**

THE

ETHICS OF EVOLUTION EXAMINED.



THE latest outgrowth of the theory of Evolution is found in the Ethics it has sought to formulate. Many writers are in the field, but by common consent the greatest of them is Mr. Herbert Spencer. His writings are most referred to, his name has most authority among Evolutionists, and we shall limit ourselves to his writings.

Mr.
Spencer's
statement
of the
genesis of
moral
intuitions

We begin by quoting from him a statement which sets forth in few words the method by which evolution seeks to explain morality. We make this quotation, as it is well to have at the outset a definite view of the matter with which we have to deal.

“To make my position fully understood, it seems needful to add that, corresponding to the fundamental propositions of a developed moral science, there have been and still are, developing in the race, certain fundamental moral intuitions; and that, though these moral intuitions are the results of accumulated experiences of Utility, gradually organised and inherited, they have come to be quite independent of conscious experience. Just in the same way that I believe the intuition of space to have arisen from organised and consolidated experiences of all antecedent individuals, who bequeathed to him their slowly-developed nervous organizations,—just as I believe that this intuition, requiring only to be made definite by personal experi-

ence, has practically become a form of thought, apparently quite independent of experience; so do I believe that the experiences of utility, organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which, by continued transmission and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition, certain emotions corresponding to right and wrong conduct, which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility. I also hold that just as the *space-intuition* responds to the exact demonstrations of Geometry, and has its rough conclusions interpreted and verified by them; so will moral intuitions respond to the demonstrations of moral science, and will have their rough conclusions interpreted and verified by them."¹

Admission that man has now an intuitive knowledge of truth.

We take note of the concession here made by Mr. Spencer, because it marks the end of a long controversy, if from another point of view it marks the beginning of a new one. We have it here admitted that man has an intuition of truth, truth which is recognised as true as soon as it is understood. What origin soever the intuition may have had, it is conceded that now and here for the individual there are truths of intuition, both mathematical and moral. This is a distinct gain, and an advance on the old assertion that worlds may exist where two and two might make five. Still, we must not make too much of the admission, for it is often the habit of Mr. Spencer to take away with the one hand what he concedes with the other. The old controversy was whether custom and association could account for, and explain the intuitions of the mind. The old answer was Yes,

The old controversy.

¹ *Data of Ethics*, p. 123.

and students of the history of philosophy will readily recall to mind the various attempts to show that the laws of association could account for experience. To the same question Mr. Spencer and Mr. Lewes, and evolutionists in general, answer both No and Yes. They answer that if you have regard only to the individual, then it is conceded that he has forms of thought and faculties of moral intuition which have no apparent basis in individual experience, and are apparently quite independent of it. But they answer that if you have regard to the race, if you widen the meaning of custom and association, to embrace the whole history of life, then these can account for all the beliefs of man, both those which are fundamental and also those which are less fundamental. Truths which are now forms of thought, truths which are *a priori* to the individual, are *a posteriori* to the race.

The truth intuitively known *a priori* to the individual but *a posteriori* to the race, according to Mr. Spencer.

The concession made to intuition is thus more apparent than real. An intuition is only custom made inveterate. It is only an association of facts or ideas which, from frequent repetitions, has become inseparable. Obviously the former controversy has been begun anew, and the issues are greater than before. Hume's position was that all knowledge is the outgrowth of sensation; the position of Spencer is different only in the fact that he demands a longer time for sensations to cluster themselves together, and to elevate them-

The concession more apparent than real.

selves into faculties of intuition. It will be well to inquire into the possibility of this transformation.

"I also hold," says Mr. Spencer, in the passage already quoted, "that as the space-intuition responds to the exact demonstrations of geometry, and has its rough conclusions interpreted and verified by them."

The space-intuition fundamental, and without its constant use geometry cannot proceed.

What precise meaning is attached by Mr. Spencer to these words it is difficult to say. It is certain, however, that the procedure of geometry is the exact opposite of what he describes. In every geometrical demonstration appeal is made to, and the verification is supplied by the space-intuition, whose "rough conclusions" he thinks require verification. This is an illustration of a confusion of thought which constantly recurs in the writings of Mr. Spencer. It appears most frequently as an inability to distinguish between things that differ. Nothing is more common with him than to accumulate as proof of a certain proposition a number of particulars which have no common principle, and have no common bearing on the point the truth of which has to be established. In the case before us there is a sense in which the rough conclusions of the space-intuition have to be verified by the exact demonstrations of geometry. These, however, refer only to actual matters, such as the shape, size, distance, and other quantitative relations of the different objects which are within our view. But even the determination of these presuppose the space-intuition geometry is supposed

The sense in which the conclusions of the space-intuition have to be verified by the exact demonstrations of geometry.

to verify. The space-intuition which emerges as the consummation at the end of a process, is of such an indispensable nature, that without it the process could not have begun. Geometricians assume the space-intuition, they work from it, they appeal to it at every stage of their demonstrations, and this intuition has such authority, that a singular act of perception, presentative or representative, is sufficient to establish the validity of the truth thus intuitively seen, as a universal truth, true everywhere and always. In this sphere one presentation is equal to a thousand; our conviction of the validity of intuitive truth, at the very first presentation of it to our minds, is so strong that increased experience does not make it stronger. The space-intuition has no need of verification, it verifies itself, and it is the touchstone of the truth of geometrical demonstration.

Authoritative nature of intuitive truth.

Experience is possible because we have intuitions, and every experience, however slight, presupposes the intuition, which, by the theory of Mr. Spencer, emerges as the result of the experience. It is remarkable also, that the procedure of Mr. Spencer himself corresponds exactly with the usual procedure of geometricians. The first chapter of his *Psychology* is entitled "A Datum Wanted," and the second is called "The Universal Postulate," which is thus expressed, "a belief which is proved by the inconceivableness of its negation to invariably

Experience possible because of intuitions.

Mr. Spencer's system of philosophy is based on intuitions.

exist is true." It is curious to find that the universal postulate is an intuition; on it he bases all his reasoning, and he regards his reasoning as gaining in cogency in proportion as he can make direct and immediate use of the postulate. Without the postulate he cannot move a step, or draw an inference. Grant him the datum, and he can move onwards to complete the great structure of his philosophy. Refuse to grant him the validity of his datum, or the sufficiency of his postulate, and he is powerless. In the case of Mr. Spencer, too, the experience philosophy is based on intuition.

Attempt of
Mr.
Spencer to
trace the
genesis of
intuitions.

No doubt he proceeds immediately to show how the universal postulate has been obtained, and we have from his pen a number of chapters of special analysis, of general synthesis, and special synthesis, in which he endeavours to describe the genesis of special intuitions, as well as the genesis of that intuition which he describes as the universal postulate. But for that genesis the universal postulate is needed even at the starting-point, and it is needed at every stage of the process. We ask again how we can conceive of a universal postulate which is needed at every stage, and yet is itself the product of the process which it governs all along? If it can be shown that the simplest experience is impossible if we do not possess these ideas beforehand, then the argument that intuition is the product of experience falls to the ground. Reduce experience

to its simplest elements, yet whenever there emerges a state of consciousness, there are already present those intuitions which form at once the basis and the test of valid experience. It is unnecessary to dwell further on this point, on which so much has been written since the time of Kant. We pass on to our proper subject, and we propose to examine Mr. Spencer's account of the genesis of moral intuition.

Mr. Spencer's account of the genesis of moral intuition.

It is well to have clearly before our minds the fundamental assumption made by Mr. Spencer. It is

“that the experiences of utility, organised and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which, by continued transmission and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition, certain emotions responding to right and wrong conduct, which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility.”

Concentrating our attention on the central part of this statement, we look steadfastly at what is involved in it. Put nakedly it stands thus, “nervous modifications have become faculties of moral intuition.” Mr. Spencer has certainly the courage of his convictions, and in this startling proposition has placed boldly before his readers what is implied in his system. The sentence passes at a bound from the outer world of matter to the inmost centre of self-conscious life and thought, and in a bold synthesis identifies the two. In the sentence is gathered up the result of all the work of Mr.

Nervous modifications cannot become faculties of moral intuition.

Spencer. Here a nervous organisation, which has somehow arisen, grown, accumulated to itself increments and modifications; there in the end faculties of moral intuition. We might have forgotten, in the long process of perusing the voluminous works of Mr. Spencer, the identity of nervous modification with faculties of moral intuition, had he not in kindness placed them side by side. The identification of the two sets us to examine the process by which they are identified.

The theory fails when brought face to face with patent facts.

The theory receives a fatal shock as soon as it is brought face to face with facts which are apparent to every one. I have received from my ancestors a nervous organisation, modified and enriched by all the experience through which they have passed. They have bequeathed to me this inheritance, and my nervous organisation is such as to have born with it faculties of moral intuition. Compared with the immense period during which this nervous organism has been used, the time during which I can use it is very brief indeed, and the modifications which can be made in it by me must be very slight in comparison. Yet, on the contrary, the fact stands thus, recognised as conspicuously by Mr. Spencer as by any other writer on education, that the modifications introduced into character by education, in the comprehensive sense of that word, are infinitely more important than those we have received by inheritance. At all

It fails to account for the growth of character in a man's lifetime by evolution.

events, it will be admitted by all that education, the training of the family, the discipline of the school, and the influence of social life, are elements in the formation of character whose importance cannot be over-rated. Where are the nervous modifications to correspond with these changes in the human character produced by education? They are not to be found.

Nor do nervous modifications represent all that I have received from the past, any more than they can represent all I receive from day to day in the present. If they did, I should be limited to that share in the universal inheritance which my immediate ancestors have been able to acquire and to bequeath to me. What they were, that I would be, with only an infinitesimal change in some direction. Nervous modification is a costly and a slow process—too costly and slow to fit me for my life-work. Humanity is thrifty, and has found out a more excellent way. It has found out other and less expensive ways of registering its higher experiences. Literature, art, science, the recorded thoughts, feelings, and deeds of mankind are not limited by the nervous organisations which each generation has bequeathed to its successors. And to-day my inheritance includes the achievement of inspired writers like Moses and Isaiah, the thoughts of philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, the songs of poets like Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. In

It fails to account for the inheritance of man, received independent of and apart from nervous modifications

What the inheritance includes.

a word, all that has been done by humanity has become mine, whether my ancestors have had or had not that particular nervous modification which might be held to correspond to the *Republic* of Plato, or the *Principia* of Newton. The first objection therefore to be taken to Mr. Spencer's view is, that it can neither account for the influence of education, nor for the inheritance of the past.

There is no proof that nervous modifications accompany mental and moral development.

It implies also that for every great thought, or lofty imagination, or holy feeling, there is a corresponding nervous modification. From the nature of the case no proof of this can be given, nor can there be any proof of the other assumption, that nervous modifications have preceded or accompanied mental and moral development in the past. This has been put so well by Dr. Martineau, that we venture to borrow the statement of it:—

“The fact is, that the evolution theory rests mainly upon the evidence of *organisms*; and when they have been duly disposed in the probable order of their development, their animating instincts and functional actions are obliged, it is supposed, to follow suite; and it is therefore taken for granted rather than shown, that by a parallel internal history, the most rudimentary animal tendencies have transmuted themselves into the attributes of a moral and spiritual nature. But the essential difference between the two cases must not be overlooked. The crust of the earth preserves in its strata the memorials of living structure, in an order which cannot be mistaken, enabling us to associate the types that co-exist, and to arrange those which are successive; and, in spite of the missing links of the series, to observe the traces of a clear ascent, the higher forms making their first appearance after the ruder. The archæology of nature is in this respect perfectly analogous to that of history; and supplies a chain of relative dates with as much certainty as

No exact correspondence between the moral and the physical.

the coins disinterred at different dates, and of graduated workmanship from the ruins of a buried empire. But just as, in this case, the image and superscription report to you only the place and time of the Cæsar they represent, but tell you nothing of his character and will ; so in the other, the fossil organ is silent about the passion that stirred it, the instinct that directed it, the precise range and kind of consciousness which belonged to its possessor. In other words you have, and can have, no record of psychological relations, in correspondence with the hierarchy of forms ; for you cannot get into the consciousness of other creatures ; and if, in order to find room for educing the moral affections from what is unmoral, you begin with our præhuman progenitors, and take their private biography in hand, and catch their first inklings of what is going to be conscience, you are simply fitting a picture to your own preconception. To a certain extent there is, no doubt, a definite and known relation between structure and function in animals, enabling you from the presence of the one to know the other. The wing, the fin, the legs, reveal the element and the habit of a creature's life ; the jaw, the teeth, the condyles for the connected muscles, disclose his food-appetite, and his modes both of pursuit and of self-defence. But long before we reach the problem which engages us we come to the end of this line of inference. There are no bones or muscles or feathers appropriated to the exclusive use of self-love ; no additional eye or limb set apart for the service of benevolence ; no judicial wig adhering to the head that owns a conscience ; so that, in this field, *i.e.*, through the whole scene of the moral phenomena, no help can be had from the zoological record. Nothing can be more chimerical than præ-historical psychology."¹

Neither
conscience
nor any
of our
higher
feelings has
any physical
organ.

It is confessedly difficult to set forth all that is implied in the notion of heredity, or to assign limits to what may or may not be transmitted to us from our ancestors. At the same time, it is not difficult to see that the equation between nervous modifications and faculties of moral intuition which Mr. Spencer endeavours to establish cannot hold

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii., pp. 340, 341.

Pleasure is evanescent, and its results are limited to the nervous organism.

true. The experiences of utility which are spoken of, are experiences of pleasure, and it is not explained how pleasurable experiences can be organised or consolidated. For a pleasurable feeling is an evanescent state; it was, and is not. In the moment of fruition it ceases to be, and the effect of pleasure on the nervous system is to produce a change in its structure. The utmost result of pleasure in relation to the nervous system is to produce a momentary change or modification, more or less great. And what is transmitted is the nervous organisation thus modified. It is a gratuitous assumption, that along with the changed nervous system thus transmitted, there are transmitted also the feelings and experiences which originally gave rise to, and accompanied these changes of structure. But nervous structure remains nervous structure from first to last, and how great soever may have been their modifications, and however numerous the generations through which they have been transmitted, they are in the end nervous modifications and nothing more. The nervous system, however, plays a large part in the system of Mr. Spencer. Modifications in its structure are by him held to account for all the modifications of mind. He has not shown how this is possible as a matter of philosophy, nor has he been able to show that it is a matter of fact. He has shown, on the contrary, that changes in the nervous organism are

All nervous changes are accounted for and expressed in physical terms in Mr. Spencer's system.

physical changes to be accounted for and explained by physical causes alone, and may be described in physical terms alone, without reference to any such thing as feeling or consciousness. For feeling is, on his theory, something gratuitous, something inexplicably added to the physical changes of the nervous structure. And yet Mr. Spencer holds the correlation to be so close, that he can afford to make the physical changes of the nervous system a register of the growth of spirit, and an explanation of the highest attainments of spirit. Consciousness for him begins with a nervous shock, and every increase of faculty is accompanied by or caused by a more complicated shock until the faculty of moral intention emerges as the result of this series of nervous shocks. One would naturally have supposed that this had been made out of a series of demonstrations founded on the examination of nervous structures in the various stages of their development. At one stage a nervous system ought to be shown us at the very time when consciousness began, and that added modification ought to be pointed out which caused consciousness to be. Other modifications, corresponding to the growth of experience, and to separate faculties, memory, hope, imagination, reason, until at last moral intuition stands forth with its appropriate nervous modification. Mr. Spencer's theory assumes that a series of correlations can thus be made out. It remains an assumption, and nothing more.

Feeling, according to Mr. Spencer, something gratuitous.

His conception of consciousness.

Mr. Spencer's theory an assumption and nothing more.

Mr.
Spencer's
view of
man.

A consequence of this assumption is that Mr. Spencer is constrained to look on man as an aggregate of feelings, which feelings are again dependent utterly on the nervous organism. As Lange has pointed out, it remains true that if all the consequences of Darwinism are granted, the conscious life of man remains still a problem which requires special treatment. With Mr. Spencer, however, the problem of ethics is sought to be solved by reference to methods which have been found adequate in lower spheres of life. He is constrained to reject the conception of freedom, and to treat it as an illusion. The illusion arises from the belief

“that at each moment the *ego* present as such in consciousness is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas which then exist.”

His incon-
sistency

We have always criticised the psychological bearings and implications of this statement.¹ We now look at it in its bearing on the problem of ethics. All mankind have fallen into the strange illusion of supposing themselves to be something more than their “feelings and ideas.” Even Mr. Spencer is no exception to the rule; at all events, he is in the constant habit of using language which is meaningless, unless he is something more than the aggregate of ideas and emotions existent for the time. Supposing, however, that the *ego* is this aggregate

¹ Present Day Tract, No. 29: *The Philosophy of Mr. Herbert Spencer Examined*, pp. 13-28.

and nothing more, how does the further illusion of freedom arise? We get, it seems, into the habit of speaking of ourselves as if we were something separate from the group of psychical states which constitute the action, and we fall into the error of supposing that it was not the impulse alone which determined the action. Causality does not, it appears, belong to the ego, but to a particular feeling, idea, or impulse. How a consciousness of self can have arisen at all on Mr. Spencer's terms is not evident. How a consciousness of the freedom of self could have arisen is even more mysterious. For if the connection between feelings and actions be what Mr. Spencer describes it, then the inference for the consciousness to draw is, that the will is necessitated. The puzzle is hopeless. How came this ego to have its place in consciousness? How could a bundle of conscious states impose on the "aggregate," that it was something apart from the aggregate, and could cause changes in it? Well, if this be an explanation of the illusion of freedom, the explanation is more mysterious than the fact.

Supposition of unrelated feelings as causes.

If a desirable state of feeling be the aim of conduct, as Mr. Spencer affirms, then it may be remarked that when it is so, I look forward to that state as mine. I look forward, and see myself in the state in which I desire to be; and if my action is determined by it, this follows, not from an impulse which

Mr. Spencer's affirmation as to the aim of conduct.

An aim is intelligible only when viewed in relation to the conception of self.

singly and alone produces its own consequence, but from the impulse as ruled by the conception of self. The self is conceived as now existent, as persistent through changes of state, and as existent in the desirable state of feeling which it foresaw and strove after. Mr. Spencer assumes this as true, though in terms he denies it. He cannot get rid of the conception of self. For it is through this conception that every pleasure has the possibility of becoming a personal good. Pleasure is not the end, but the satisfaction of self by means of the pleasure. The consciousness of self originated the act, persists through the act, and the series of results set in motion by the act, and bears with it the knowledge that the act and its consequences are due to him, and he is responsible for them. A mere abstract state of desirable feeling, without relation to the self which accompanies and constitutes it in reference to an object, is one of the wonderful things which meet us in the philosophy of Mr. Spencer.

Mr. Spencer's statement of the problem of moral science.

The problem of ethics becomes very complicated indeed in the assumption, that an aggregate of feelings and ideas can attain to morality. But Mr. Spencer contrives to get on, and the first step he takes is to change the nature of the problem.

“The view for which I contend is, that morality properly so called—the science of right conduct—has for its object to determine *how* and *why* certain modes of conduct are detrimental, and certain other modes beneficial. These good and

bad results cannot be accidental, but must be necessary consequences of the constitution of things, and I conceive it to be the business of moral science to deduce, from the laws of life and the conditions of existence, what kinds of action necessarily tend to produce happiness, and what kind to produce unhappiness. Having done this, its deductions are to be recognised as laws of conduct, and are to be conformed to irrespective of a direct estimation of happiness and misery."—*Data of Ethics*, p. 57.¹

Waiving altogether the difficulties which Mr. Spencer's doctrine of the ego raises against his statement of the business of moral science, we shall look at the statement in itself. Suppose we come to the *Data of Ethics* for guidance as to the rules of conduct. What is right conduct? And the answer we receive is, that we ought to find out *how* and *why* certain modes of conduct are detrimental, and certain other modes are beneficial. Such information, supposing it possible to obtain it, would not be without its use. It pre-supposes, however, that we have made a tabulated account of the results of conduct, and have been able to set them down as beneficial or the reverse. In addition, it pre-supposes that we have advanced so far as to have got a satisfactory theory of *how* and *why* these results have their respective charac-

Is there any guidance for conduct on these terms?

Impossibility of making a tabulated account of the results of conduct.

¹ It would be an instructive exercise to substitute for the language used by Mr. Spencer, the language he uses when speaking of the ego. It would run in something like the following fashion: "The view for which the aggregate of feelings and ideas which now exists, and is called Mr. Spencer, contends." We have tried to do it, but the result is too grotesque to pursue it any further.

Identifica-
tion of the
beneficial,
the good,
and the
pleasure-
able; also
of the de-
trimental,
the bad, and
the painful
by Mr.
Spencer.

teristics. Our knowledge of the laws of life and the conditions of existence is supposed to be sufficiently extensive and exact to warrant us in drawing inferences worthy to be accepted as a guide to right living. All this is a preliminary to real moral guidance. For it is to be observed that when we have accomplished this heavy task, we have not yet arrived at a distinction which involves anything moral: we have only reached what is described as what is beneficial and detrimental. How are we to cross the boundary, and reach the region where moral distinctions obtain? Mr. Spencer does not seem to suspect the existence of a boundary. In the next sentence he quietly substitutes the words "good" and "evil" for beneficial and detrimental. We are aware that to him they are identical. All the same, however, he is by no means unwilling to receive the help to his argument which the moral meaning of the new words brings to it. Translating the new words back into their Spencerian equivalents, it is obvious that his argument makes no advance. We have still another substitution of terms to notice in this characteristic paragraph. Good and evil are again dropt out, and we have instead "the kinds of action which necessarily tend to produce happiness or unhappiness." Beneficial, good, pleasurable, detrimental, bad, painful, are interchanged, as if synonymous. No doubt they are so in the new ethics of Mr. Spencer. They

Ethics
not a
system
which sets
forth our
pleasures
and advan-
tages.

are not so, however, in the ordinary use of language, nor in the moral consciousness of man. The ethics of Mr. Spencer can at the best be a system which sets forth our pleasures and advantages. It does not touch the margin of the higher region which answers to the call of duty, and feels the binding obligation of righteousness, truth, and goodness.

It is not to the purpose here to enter on a discussion of Utilitarianism in any of the forms it has lately assumed. Guidance by pleasures and pains has been abundantly shown by many writers, from different points of view, to be inapplicable to human beings. What we purpose to show here is, that the theory of evolution has not obviated the objections brought against Hedonism; and it has brought fresh difficulties of its own. We may be permitted here to refer to the able and thorough discussion of this subject by Mr. Sorley.¹ He has pointed out that the development of life does not always tend to increase pleasure, and the laws of its development cannot be safely adopted as maxims for the attainment of pleasure. He has shown also that it is impossible for us to say—

Does evolution help Hedonism?

Development of life does not tend to increase pleasure.

“what kinds of actions necessarily tend to produce happiness, and what kinds to produce unhappiness.”

He has shown, by a lengthened argument, in which

¹ *Ethics of Naturalism*, by W. R. Sorley. Messrs. Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh.

we have been able to find no flaw, that pleasure may

“arise from any, or almost any, course of conduct which the conditions of existence admit of. The evolutionist, therefore, can have no surer idea of greatest pleasure—even although this may not be a very sure one—than that it will follow in the train of the greatest or most varied activity which harmonizes with the laws of life.”¹

Biological deduction of laws of conduct void through uncertainty.

It is obvious, therefore, that Mr. Spencer's proposed deduction of rules of conduct from the laws of life and the conditions of existence, even were it possible, is void through uncertainty. It would be as reasonable to deduce the theory of chemical equivalents from the laws of pure being. What is needed is special inquiry into, and a recognition of, the peculiar phenomena of the moral world, and Ethics has to account for and explain the phenomena of that world, and not to substitute for it another set of phenomena altogether.

Moral phenomena ignored or misinterpreted.

Our contention is, that Mr. Spencer has ignored in some instances the phenomena of the moral world, and has misinterpreted them in others, and generally has failed to recognise the peculiarity of the question. He has sought to apply for the explanation of moral phenomena a hypothesis framed for the explanation of physical or biological phenomena, and it is no wonder that he has failed in consequence. He is aware of the difference between the two, and now and then brings us to

¹ *Ethics of Naturalism*, pp. 201-2.

the chasm which intervenes between the one and the other. Here is one of the many descriptions he gives of the "struggle for existence":—

"The multitudinous creatures of all kinds which fill the earth, cannot live apart from one another—are interfered with by one another. In large measure the adjustments of laws to ends which we have been considering, are components of that 'struggle for existence,' carried on, too, between members of the same species, and between members of a different species; and, very generally, a successful adjustment made by one creature involves an unsuccessful adjustment made by another creature, either of the same kind, or of a different kind. That the carnivore may live, herbivore animals must die; and that its young may be reared, the young of weaker creatures must be orphaned. Maintenance of the hawk and its brood involves the deaths of many small birds; and that small birds may multiply their progeny must be fed with innumerable sacrificed worms and larvæ. Competition among members of the same species has allied, though less conspicuous, results. The stronger often carries off by force the prey which the weaker has caught. Monopolising certain hunting grounds, the more ferocious drive others of their kind into less favourable places. With plant-eating animals, too, the like holds; the better food is secured by the more vigorous animals, while the less vigorous and worse fed succumb either directly from innutrition or indirectly from resulting inability to escape enemies. That is to say, among creatures whose lives are carried on antagonistically, each of the two kinds of conduct must remain imperfectly evolved. Even in such few kinds of them as have little to fear from enemies or competitors, as lions or tigers, there is still inevitable failure in the adjustments of acts to ends towards the close of life. Death by starvation from inability to catch prey, shows a falling short of conduct from its ideal. This imperfectly-evolved conduct introduces us by association to conduct that is perfectly evolved."¹

The struggle for existence.

Selfishness the universal law.

"The spider kills the fly. The wiser sphinx
Stings the poor spider in the centre nerve

¹ *Data of Ethics*, 17, 18.

Victory
to the
strong.

Which paralyses only ; lays her eggs,
And buries with them with a loving care
The spider, powerless but still alive,
To warm them unto life, and afterward
To serve as food among the little ones.
This is the lesson Nature has to teach,
'Woe to the conquered, victory to the strong.'
And so, through all the ages, step by step,
The stronger and the craftiest replaced
The weaker, and increased and multiplied.
And in the end the outcome of the strife
Was man, who had dominion over all,
And preyed on all things, and the stronger man
Trampled his weaker brother under foot."¹

Survival of
the fittest.

It is not necessary to add anything to the descriptions of the law of life given in the foregoing extract. *Vae victis* is the law of life in the organic world, and biological work since Darwin wrote the *Origin of Species*, has been in the direction of setting forth additional illustrations and proof of the law "the survival of the fittest." Assuming for the sake of argument that this law is proven, the problem set to the theory of evolution is to deduce morality, as we know it in human life, from these biological conditions. It is a formidable task. Mr. Spencer is aware of the difficulty, and in the foregoing extract says—

Can
morality be
deduced
from the
struggle for
existence?

"This imperfectly evolved conduct introduces us by association to conduct that is perfectly evolved."

His self-appointed task, as described by himself is :

"to deduce from the laws of life and the conditions of existence what kinds of action necessarily tend to produce happiness, and what kinds tend to produce unhappiness."

¹ *A Modern Ideal*, by S. R. Lysaught, p. 53.

And when the time comes for this logical deduction, we must be content with "association." The transition from the conduct of animals to the conduct of man can only be made by association. Now association is of various kinds, and one kind is "contrast" or "antithesis," which is the kind used by Mr. Spencer. He speaks very severely of those moralists who do not recognise causation in the full sense of the word, and do not use it in the construction of their ethical system.

Transition to morality not by deduction, but by "association."

"So long as only *some* relation between cause and effect in conduct is recognised, and not *the* relation, a completely scientific form of knowledge has not been reached."

We venture to ask what treatment would Mr. Spencer give to a moralist who, having promised his readers to recognise causation in the full sense of the word, and rigorously use it in the deduction of rules of conduct from laws of life and conditions of existence, when the most serious step in the deduction came to be taken, introduced his readers to the new field only by "association"? Surely we have reason to say to Mr. Spencer "*de te fabula narratur.*"

Failure of Mr. Spencer to deduce morality from laws of life.

Nor does he mend the matter when he asks, referring to the same difficulty—

"Is it replied that the more intense pains and pleasures which have immediate reference to bodily needs, guide us rightly; while the weaker pains and pleasures, not immediately connected with the maintenance of life, guide us wrongly? Then the implication is that the system of guidance by

Mr. Spencer's challenge

pleasures and pains, which has answered with all creatures below the human, fails with the human. Or rather, the admission being that, with mankind, it succeeds so far as fulfilment of certain imperative wants goes, it fails in respect of wants which are not imperative. Those who think this are required, in the first place, to show how the line is to be drawn between the two; and then to show us why the system which succeeds in the lower will fail in the higher."¹

Answer thereto,
1. Science has to recognise the special character of each department.

The answer to this is twofold. In the first place, we say that whenever science passes from a simpler to a more complex subject, it has to recognise new conditions of work, and to accept new principles of explanation. Mr. Spencer has had to submit himself to this inevitable necessity, though he has striven with all his might to avoid it, and has sought to disguise the nature of his procedure. He does not deduce chemical factors from the laws of physics. He assumes them. If he has to confine himself to the definite chemical factors present in the primordial nebulæ, he is brought to a stand at the beginning of life. He is compelled to alter his method at every stage of the process, and to recognise new elements and new laws, and to assume new principles. Genesis, heredity, reproduction, are not explained but assumed. So also when he passes from what is below the human to the human, he is constrained to assume the characteristics of human nature, a faculty of moral intuition, and so on. It is consistent with the universal method of science that it recognises its

What is ample in lower regions will not serve in higher.

¹ pp. 84, 85.

limitations, and adapts itself to the peculiarities of each field of inquiry. A sufficient answer to Mr. Spencer's challenge is found when we say that the system of guidance which succeeds in the lower must fail in the higher, precisely because it is higher.

In the second place our answer is, that Mr. Spencer has himself undertaken the task he has imposed on others, and has succeeded in showing that the system of guidance by pleasures and pains has failed in the human sphere. He admits the failure, and, strange to say, the admission is on the very page in which he sets forth the challenge:—

2. Mr. Spencer has himself shown in various ways that guidance by pleasures and pains does fail with man.

“Guidance by proximate pleasures and pains fails throughout a wide range of cases.”

No doubt he goes on to explain the causes of failure, and to predict a time when the failure shall cease to be. We shall look at this prophecy a little further on. Meanwhile we lay stress on the admission. We place side by side two statements of Mr. Spencer. One is that—

Two statements of Mr. Spencer.

“the deductions of moral science are to be recognised as laws of conduct; and are to be conformed to irrespective of a direct estimation of happiness or misery.”

The second is—

“If the purpose of ethical inquiry is to establish rules of right living; and if the rules of right living are those of which the total results, individual and general, direct and indirect, are more conducive to human happiness, then it is absurd to ignore the immediate results, and to recognize only the remote results.” (p. 95.)

If pain, or, as Mr. Spencer euphemistically puts it, "disagreeable modes of consciousness," accompany acts that are really beneficial,

"that objection does not tell against guidance of pleasures and pains, since it merely implies that special and proximate pleasures and pains must be disregarded out of consideration for more remote and diffused pleasures and pains."

At one time we are told that proximate pleasures and pains must be disregarded, and at another time we are told that it is absurd to disregard them. How are we to reconcile the two? We leave them in their naked simplicity, with the remark that the contradiction is a proof that guidance by pleasures and pains fails with the human being, though it may have succeeded in lower spheres of life.

Happiness
is no end
for either
public or
private
action.

Mr. Spencer's answer to himself is not yet complete. He has granted in express terms that guidance by pleasures and pains fails with man; in addition, he has demonstrated, in his criticism of Bentham and Mill, that

"not general happiness becomes the ethical standard by which legislative action is to be guided, but universal justice" (p. 224.)

And also that in relation to private action

"the principle is true only in so far as it embodies a disguised justice."

His chapter on "Trial and Compromise" is one of the most powerful in the book, and in it he has clearly shown the inadequacy of guidance by pleasures and pains. Happiness cannot be taken as **an end** either for public action or for private action.

In his statement of the problem of ethics he has, however, said that the

“ultimate moral aim is a desirable state of feeling called by whatever name—gratification, enjoyment, happiness, pleasure somewhere, at some time, to some being or beings, is an expungable element of the conception. It is as much a necessary form of moral intuition as space is a necessary form of intellectual intuitions.”

A necessary form of intuition, which is at times unnecessary, is surely a curious conception. For, according to the statement, happiness gives place to justice as a guide to action, on the ground that it is a more intelligible end, and also because happiness as an end is indefinite. This is another illustration of the failure of guidance by pleasures and pains, whether proximate or remote. If justice has become the guide to action, then we may perhaps be inclined to ask, Is the conception of justice so perfectly plain and intelligible as Mr. Spencer supposes it to be? Nor can the answer be easily given. We recall to mind the opening chapter of Plato's *Republic*, and the discussion in it on the nature of justice; and the discussion by Mr. Sidgwick in the *Methods of Ethics*, and we are not sure if the substitution of justice for happiness can be readily accepted. We are sure, however, that in either case the result is subversive of Mr. Spencer's system; for it raises the question of the relation of justice to happiness,—a question which admits of no answer from the standpoint of evolution.

Attempt to substitute justice for happiness as end of conduct.

Illegitimate because the relation of justice to happiness has to be defined.

Further statement by Mr. Spencer of guidance by pleasures and pains.

We feel constrained to quote a passage in which the failure of Mr. Spencer's argument is recognised in express terms by Mr. Spencer himself:—

“Were pleasures all of one kind, differing only in degree; were pains all of one kind, differing only in degree; and could pleasures be measured against pains with definite results, the problems of conduct would be greatly simplified. Were the pleasures serving as incentives and deterrents, simultaneously present to consciousness with like vividness, or were they all immediately impending, or were they all equi-distant in time; the problems would be further simplified. And they would be still further simplified if the pleasures and pains were exclusively those of the actor. But both the desirable and the undesirable feelings are of various kinds, making quantitative comparisons difficult; some are present and some are future, increasing the difficulty of quantitative comparison; some are entailed on self and some on others, again increasing the difficulty. So that the guidance yielded by the primary principle reached is of little service unless supplemented by the guidance of secondary principles.”¹

Could we have a more complete acknowledgment of the fact that guidance by pleasures and pains fails with the human being? How shall we obtain the secondary principles of guidance? and what is their validity? If they are derived from the primary principle, they share its uncertainty. If they are independent of it, then it fails; in either case the result is fatal to the theory of Mr. Spencer.

Mr. Spencer's prediction that guidance by pleasures and pains will succeed in the future.

Guidance by pleasures and pains having thus been shown to fail, Mr. Spencer finds a refuge in the prediction that eventually it will succeed. When life is complete, and the organism is fully adjusted to the environment, and the happy time is come

¹ *Data of Ethics*, pp. 150-1.

when every action of man demanded by social conditions shall give him pleasure, then the conflict will cease, the disparity will disappear. With great solemnity he says—

“Not he who believes that adaptation will increase is absurd, but he who doubts that it will increase is absurd.”

Well, we are in the unhappy condition of those whose belief is here characterised as absurd. Taking into account only those forces which, according to Mr. Spencer, have guided the evolution of life, we see no escape from pessimism. If we look forward across the years, we come to a physical condition of things which must necessarily, according to the teaching of science, produce a change in human life. The process from the first germ of life to the highest possible life has been long, and the conflict has been great. Then must come a time when this process will reach its culminating point, and the history of life must then be a period of decline and fall, until when the sun has grown cold, and the earth has grown unfit for life, the end is desolation and annihilation.

We need not, however, go so far into the future to free ourselves from the nightmare of Mr. Spencer's prophecy. All that is needful for this purpose is to point out that his assumption is untrue. The assumption is that evolved conduct is moral conduct. Evolved conduct may be good or may be evil. Evil does not become good by be-

The prediction must fail for lack of time.

It must also fail from the fact that evolved conduct is not necessarily moral conduct.

coming definite and coherent, nor does good lose its character by becoming indefinite and incoherent. The appliances of civilization may be used for evil, and an evil man may place himself in most definite relations to the resources of civilization. Nihilists and dynamiters have been most definite in their use of explosives, most definite in the aim they have in view, and their conduct is quite coherent. They use the telegraph and the railway, the dynamite is a most definite chemical substance, and the clockwork is accurately timed, so as to release a trigger at a definite moment to cause a definite explosion, to accomplish a particular end.

The tests of definiteness, coherence, and heterogeneity afford no criterion of moral conduct. The formula of evolution may be as readily ascribed to the development of evil conduct as of good. Evil may be traced from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, and all the marks of evolution may be applied to it. We may trace crime from rudimentary beginnings, to the most complex conspiracy ever formed, and the history of the process would be in exact correspondence with the requirements of evolved conduct, as described by Mr. Spencer. Nor is the matter mended by the proposed substitution of Industrialism for the military and feudal spirit which formerly dominated the lives of men. Industrialism has been formulated in political economy, and political

Evil may
consist with
the law of
evolution.

economy is non-moral,—at all events before the recent revolt against its non-moral character, against which Mr. Spencer so strenuously protests, political economy made self-interest its ruling power. It is well known that the Darwinian law of the struggle for existence is simply an extension of Malthusianism, and the doctrine of political economy, in some forms of it, is simply self-interest reduced to system. How are we to evolve a new morality out of selfishness? or recognise in Industrialism the new evolving force, which is to teach us to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, when Industrialism is based on self-interest, and teaches us to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market? We are aware of the hopes which were burning brightly in the human heart some forty years ago. We have read the speeches of Cobden, the pages of Buckle, and the universal song raised to the praise and glory of Industrialism at the time of the Exhibition of 1851. Since then many things have happened. But Mr. Spencer seems never to have outgrown the impression then made on him, nor to have recognised that the industrial tendency has need of a moral motive, which it cannot of itself supply. The transactions of the Stock Exchange, the phenomena of Strikes, the various forms of Socialism, and other things of the same order, show that Industrialism has no charm of its own, whereby it may produce good and

The law of the struggle for existence is an extension of Malthusianism.

Industrialism.

The industrial tendency needs a moral motive.

remove evil. It may give increased facilities for good; it may also afford a new soil for the production of evil. At all events, it affords no criterion of what is moral.

Moral obligation must be accounted for.

Any attempt to account for morality must have regard to the essential feature of it. We are conscious of an obligation on our part to submit ourselves to the law which we conceive as binding upon us, and the problem set to Evolution is to show how the binding force of the rules of experience could have arisen, and how the deductions of the ethics of evolution can have authority. Let us test the attempt by a special instance. We take veracity as our example, and we propose to examine whether it is possible to account for the universal obligation to truthfulness on the evolutionary hypothesis. If morality can be deduced from the laws of life and the conditions of existence, we have a right to expect that the biological conditions which have caused success in the lower sphere, should also have scope in the higher. We find, however, that with all creatures up to man, a premium is put on deception. It is the weapon which the weak use against the strong, the only effective means which they have. Any work on natural history will afford illustration of the truth of the statement that deception is universal, and has the moral stamp of success, that is, according to Utilitarianism, upon it. The flatfish which

Proposed deduction of morality from laws of life and conditions of existence tested in the particular instance of veracity.

escapes the jaws of the dogfish is the one which can imitate most closely the colour of the sandbank on which it lies. The deception, being found to bring its advantage with it, has become an organised utility, and has been transmitted to its descendants. We need not multiply instances which will readily occur to every one. Imitation, mimicry, deception, prevail everywhere in the animal kingdom, from the least to the highest, from the insect to the mother bird, which moves as if her wings were broken, to entice the pursuer from her nest.

Deception prevalent in all the lower spheres of life.

This process of deception has the sanction of success. It has been advantageous. Those who have been best at it, have escaped the danger before which their less skilful relatives went down, and organised deception becomes the fit rule of conduct for all who have survived. It is curious to think that out of this biological law of life there should have been evolved the supreme authority of truthfulness, and its full obligation by man.

Deception stamped with success.

It becomes more curious when we pass to the world of human life. It cannot be shown on the hypothesis of evolution that the habit of truthfulness is beneficial, pleasurable, or advantageous. The utilitarian sanction for truthfulness is neither powerful nor universal. Few laws enforce it, nor is the social reprobation attaching to untruthfulness very severe. There are circumstances which to many seem to justify lying. "All is fair in love

Truthfulness cannot be shown to be advantageous

and war." To deceive an enemy has been held to be blameless, even laudable. We take the following passage from Ruskin—

The view of
Mr. Ruskin.

"Truth, that only virtue of which there are no degrees, but breaks and rents continually; that pillar of the earth but a cloudy pillar; that golden and narrow line, which the very powers and virtues which lean upon it bend, which policy and prudence conceal, which kindness and courtesy modify, which courage overshadows with his shield, imagination covers with her wings, and charity dims with her tears. How difficult must the maintenance of that authority be, which, while it has to restrain the hostility of all the worst principles of man, has also to restrain the disorders of his best,—which is continually assaulted by the one and betrayed by the other, and which regards with the same severity the lightest and the boldest violations of its law! There are some faults slight in the sight of love; some errors slight in the estimate of wisdom; but truth forgives no insult, and endures no stain.

"We do not enough consider this; nor enough dread the slight and continual occasions of offence against her. We are too much in the habit of looking at falsehood in its darkest associations, and through the colour of its worst purposes. That indignation we profess to feel at deceit absolute, is indeed only at deceit malicious. We resent calumny, hypocrisy, and treachery, because they harm us, not because they are untrue. Take the detraction and the mischief from the untruth, and we are little offended by it; turn it into praise and we may be pleased with it, and yet it is not the calumny nor treachery that does the largest sum of mischief in the world; they are continually crushed, and are felt only in being crushed. But it is the glistening and softly-spoken lie; the amiable fallacy; the patriotic lie of the historian, the provident lie of the politician, the zealous lie of the partizan, the merciful lie of the friend, and the careless lie of each man to himself, that casts the black shadow over humanity, through which we thank any man who pierces, as we thank those who dig a well in the desert. Happy that the thirst for truth still remains with us, even when we have wilfully left the fountains of it."¹

¹ *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, chap. ii., sect. i.

We are prepared to stake the whole question of the evolution of morality in this one point. How can the felt obligation to be truthful be shown to be an organized and transmitted utility, when the advantage of veracity cannot be shown. On the contrary, if we limit our view to the present life, the practice of veracity can be proven to be disadvantageous. The practice of this virtue has many difficulties to contend with. There are many instances in which it has brought death to the witness for truth, and ruin to his friends. Many moralists and theologians have held a lie to be justifiable to elude an enemy or prevent a crime. May we tell a lie in the service of duty? Basil says No, and Chrysostom says Yes. Augustine is of opinion that if the whole human race could be saved by one lie, one must rather let it perish. And Jacobi affirms—

If the opposite of truthfulness prevails in biology, and the advantage of veracity in human life cannot be shown, then the obligation of truthfulness cannot be deduced from experience.

“I will lie like Desdemona, I will lie and deceive like Pylades who took the place of Orestes.”

We quote these for the sake of showing that the utility of truthfulness is by no means obvious; and there can be no such experience of the pleasure, advantage, or benefit of veracity as to account for the fact that men value truth for its own sake, and feel constrained to practice it, regardless of consequences.

So strongly is this felt by Utilitarians of all shades, that they have given up the attempt to

Utilitarian
mode of
evading the
difficulty.

derive veracity from an experience of its utility, or to find its sanction in utility. Their way is to deny the binding obligation of truthfulness. They are inclined to hold that the law of truth is neither universal nor supreme. Whether we are or are not to be truthful depends on time, and place, and circumstances. If veracity is an absolute and independent duty, and not a special application of some higher principle or principles, then it is conceded by all that experiences of utility can neither account for it, nor explain the sanction of it. This has been so well put by Mr. Russell Wallace that we quote the passage:—

Testimony
of Mr.
Russell
Wallace.

“A number of prisoners, taken during the Sautal insurrection, were allowed to go free on parole to work at a certain spot for wages. After some time cholera attacked them, and they were obliged to leave, but every one of them returned and gave up his earnings to the guard. Two hundred savages with money in their girdles, walked thirty miles back to prison rather than break their word. My own experience with savages has furnished me with similar, although less severely tested, instances; and we cannot avoid asking, how is it, that in these few cases, ‘experiences of utility’ have left such an overpowering impression, while in so many others they have left none? The experiences of savage men, as regards the utility of truth, must, in the long run, be pretty nearly equal. How is it, that, in some cases, the result is a sanctity which overrides all considerations of personal advantage, while in others there is hardly a rudiment of such a feeling?

“The intuitional theory, which I am now advocating, explains this by the supposition that there is a feeling—a sense of right and wrong—in our nature, antecedent to, and independent of experiences of utility. When free-play is allowed to the relations between man and man, this feeling attaches itself to those acts of universal utility or self-sacrifice which are the

products of our affections and sympathies, and which we term moral; while it may be, and often is, perverted, to give the same sanction to acts of narrow and conventional utility, which are really immoral—as when the Hindoo will tell a lie, but will sooner starve than eat unclean food; and looks upon the marriage of adult females as gross immorality.

“It is difficult to conceive that such an intense and mystical feeling of right and wrong (so intense as to overcome all ideas of personal advantage or utility), could have developed out of accumulated ancestral experiences of utility; and still more difficult to understand, how feelings developed by one set of utilities, could be transferred to acts of which the utility was partial, imaginary, or altogether absent. But if a moral sense is an essential part of our nature, it is easy to see that its sanction may often be given to acts which are useless or immoral; just as the natural appetite for drink is perverted by the drunkard into the means of his destruction.”¹

As far as regards the obligation to truthfulness, we can find no basis for it in biological conditions. Biology gives its sanction to concealment and deception. Nor is it more hopeful to seek a sanction for it in the experience of man, that truth is advantageous. But yet the fact stands before us, plain and palpable, that the truth has claims on us which we feel bound to acknowledge. We ought to be truthful. Whence this oughtness? and this recognition of universal obligation? The universality and supremacy of moral law cannot be explained. All that Mr. Spencer will recognize is the obligation to use the means if we are to get to the end; a substitute which can never be mistaken for the original feeling of “oughtness.”

No basis
for veracity
in biological
conditions.

The surprising thing, however, is that Mr.

¹ On *Natural Selection*, pp. 353-5.

Ethics can, on the theory of evolution, be only that branch of science which deals with the natural history of conduct.

Spencer can speak of "Ethics" at all. No ethics are inconceivable in which *will* does not stand for something. But according to the teaching of Mr. Spencer, will is an illusion. With him there is no self, there are only states of consciousness, which are again the result of molecular and chemical changes in the physical organism. The physical changes always produce the corresponding phenomena of memory, volition, feeling. Thought is as mechanical as digestion; conduct is as purposeless as gravitation; and the feeling of obligation is a useless and unnecessary accompaniment of the molecular changes of the organism. Can we command conduct categorically irrespective of and without regard to consequences? Can we say to men, Thou shalt not, thou shalt, or must we say it is worth your while to do this and avoid that? But if conduct depends entirely on the physical constitution and environment of a man, why should anything be said to him one way or the other? We here touch again on the failure of evolutionary ethics, which cannot account for the idea of obligation. If, however, the doctrine of Evolution could be successfully applied to ethics, the science of ethics would cease to deal with what ought to be, and confine itself strictly to what is. Ethics would become the branch of science which deals with the natural history of conduct.

This is really what ethics have become in the

hands of Mr. Spencer. Mr. Spencer does not care about a feeling or idea of moral obligation. Believing as he does that freedom is an illusion, what has he to do with the necessity of self-control in action? In ordinary belief, a man controls himself because he is free, is responsible because free, feels above all the shame of penitence and the agonies of remorse, because he knows he could have acted differently if he had exerted his free volition. But with Mr. Spencer, a man is at the most a conscious and social animal; a thing made up of atoms and molecules. What duty has he to recognise, except the promptings of nature? What is right but the duty of attaining to the fitness which will survive? As to the feeling of obligation it is simply the expression of a consciousness of mal-adaptation to the environment. So Mr. Spencer says in express terms :—

Mr. Spencer's affirmation that the sense of obligation is transitory

“This remark implies the tacit conclusion, which will be to most very startling, that the sense of duty or moral obligation is transitory, and will diminish as fast as moralization increases. Startling though it is, this conclusion can be satisfactorily defended. Evidently, with complete adaptation to the social state, that element in the moral consciousness which is expressed by the word obligation will disappear. The higher action required for the harmonious carrying on of life will be as much matters of course as those lower actions which the simpler desires prompt. In their proper times and places and proportions, the moral sentiments will guide men just as spontaneously and adequately as do the sensations.”¹

¹ *Data of Ethics*, p. 127-8.

Views of
Bentham
and Mill.

How much wiser than Bentham and Mill is Mr. Spencer! Bentham thought he could do without the word "ought," carried on a fierce polemic against it, and the fact which it expressed, and the consequence was that his system made shipwreck on it. Mr. Spencer knows that "ought" represents a fact of moral consciousness. He is unwilling to lose the advantage of using it. It is living and active, here and now. But he may get rid of it quite as effectually by a prophecy. And until the time of the fulfilment of prophecy he may use the word and the fact for the strengthening of his system. Stuart Mill, in his innocence, thought he could account for intuitions by the experience of the individual. Mr. Spencer cannot get on without intuitions; he will use them when necessary, but by and by he hopes he can do without them.

This amazing fertility of resource cannot, however, be granted to him. We readily grant to him that if obligation has no other meaning than that which he formally ascribes to it, then it will disappear. To him

Mr.
Spencer's
inadequate
conception
of conscious-
ness.

"the essential trait in the moral consciousness is the control of some feeling or feelings, by some other feeling or feelings." (p. 113).

The phenomena of moral consciousness are thus a conflict of feelings, out of which conflict emerges a resultant which, being the stronger, takes the lead,

and incites to action. The statement is at once inadequate and misleading,—one feeling does not control another. When we come to the region where control can be rightly spoken of, we have passed beyond feeling; we are in the region of comparison, of judgment. Feelings and desires are known to us and felt by us, but they do not act in the pure and simple manner described by Mr. Spencer. They are elements in the comparison of motives, and are taken up by the moral judgment in order to the determination of conduct.

His statement misleading as well as inadequate.

Here we have again come across that fatal defect in the system of Mr. Spencer, which vitiates all his reasoning. We mean his habit of viewing feelings as if they were something apart, and could take their own course as if they were so many detached substances. His habitual disregard of the self-conscious subject is surprising; more specially when we also consider how with the same breath he uses language which is meaningless, unless the activity of the subject is presupposed. At one moment he speaks of the control of one feeling by another, and the next moment speaks of the

His marked inconsistency

“conscious relinquishment of immediate and special good, to gain distant and general good” as “a cardinal trait of the self-restraint called moral” (p. 114).

Is this conscious relinquishment a feeling? we trow not. The moral consciousness is something

What is
involved in
moral con-
sciousness.

more than feelings in unison or in conflict. At the very least it involves the power of looking before and after, the power of making comparison, and of determination of conduct in relation to a foreseen course of action.

This way of representing the moral consciousness has, however, enabled Mr. Spencer to speak of obligation as a vanishing quantity. He has a vision of the time when the control of one feeling by another will be perfect, and the pain of conflict will have ceased, and a man will do

“the right thing with a simple feeling of satisfaction in doing it; and will be, indeed, impatient if anything prevents him from having the satisfaction of doing it.”

He will cease to have any thought of *must*, he will have no coercive feeling of *ought*; the sense of obligation will have retreated into the background of the mind. We shall not inquire too curiously into the meaning of the antithesis between the “right” thing and the simple feeling of satisfaction in doing it. It would be too cruel to translate the word “right” into its Spencerian equivalent, and read the sentence thus:

The word
“right”
translated
into its
Spencerian
equivalent.

“He does the ‘pleasurable’ thing with a simple feeling of satisfaction in doing it.”

It would make the sentence meaningless, but that is the usual fate which inevitably waits on all schemes of Hedonistic ethics. But the point we insist on is this, that the sense of obligation never

vanishes, even when the doing of duty becomes easy and habitual. There are various reasons why this sense of obligation should continue. One reason is that the ideal of human conduct is continually growing, and seeks a higher statement and embodiment of itself, as knowledge widens. Another reason is that the demands of moral law are always such as to transcend the utmost range of human fulfilment; and Mr. Spencer's dream is possible even as a dream, only because he has lowered both the ideal of human conduct and the requirements of moral law. Still further: the conception of moral obligation set forth by Mr. Spencer is radically defective. The idea of authoritativeness, which is one element in the abstract consciousness of duty, has arisen from the fact

Obligation permanent,

1. Because the human ideal is continually growing, and, 2. Because of the infinite nature of moral law and its requirements.

Mr. Spencer's view radically defective.

“that accumulated experiences have produced the consciousness that guidance by feelings which refer to remote and general results, is usually more conducive to welfare than guidance by feelings to be immediately gratified.”

But why this should generate the authority implied in the sense of obligation is not apparent. To have regard to remote and general results does not imply morality. One may restrain himself from gratifying immediate feelings in order to gratify them more effectively in the future. Nay, he may sacrifice them for the moment, and yet all the time in the present and in the future may transgress

every rule of morality. A burglar may scorn delights, and live laborious days, may spend money in buying the implements of his craft, in order that at a fit time he may safely rob a bank or a house. In so doing would he manifest "a cardinal trait of the restraint called moral"?

Moral
coerciveness
not to be
derived
from fear
of punish-
ment.

The element of coerciveness is derived by Mr. Spencer from the fear of punishment, and these two elements of authoritativeness and coerciveness are the main elements, according to Mr. Spencer, in the consciousness of duty. The fear of punishment is the permanent motive of the savage. If we ask how this becomes the felt coercive element of duty, we are led by Mr. Spencer to undertake a long journey. At the outset we ask, Why does the savage refrain from scalping his enemy? and the answer is, Because he is afraid of the anger of the chief. This restraint arising from the "extrinsic" effects of an action, is not yet moral. The moral restraint arises when we refrain from slaying an enemy because of the intrinsic effects of the action. These intrinsic effects are of the following kind:—

"the infliction of death-agony on the victim, the destruction of all his possibilities of happiness, the entailed sufferings to his belongings."

The ground of restraint in the case of the savage is the fear of future pain to himself: with the evolutionist it is concern for the pleasures and pains of others. How is the transition made?

Mr. Spencer's account of the transition can explain only those deterrents which he neglects as non-moral. The restraint which makes a man prudent from fear of the gallows, has no mode of transforming itself into the disinterested restraint which guides its actions by regard to the well-being of other people.

Along this line we shall never reach the grand conception of duty or of virtue, as we find it embodied in human life, and expressed in human literature. A writer who can resolve the authoritativeness of duty into a calculation of future pleasure, and its coerciveness into a dread of consequences, has left out of sight a large sphere of human sentiment, and the greater part of morality. He who can look at the sense of obligation as something that must fade away, has not yet seen that the distinguishing element of duty is not restraint but constraint. Its main purpose is to prescribe what kind of life we ought to live, what work to do, what end to accomplish; not merely to say Thou shalt not, but Thou shalt. Even if we were to reach the time and state when it would be no longer necessary to say Thou shalt not, the sense of obligation would remain, and would make itself felt so long as there was a further progress to be made, a higher ideal to reach, and a further end to be accomplished. Neither by the attempt to resolve it into its elements, nor by the prediction

Duty not
restraint
but
constraint

that it will fade away, has Mr. Spencer succeeded in getting rid of the sense of moral obligation.

Limited use
of law of
causality in
ethics.

We shall look for a little at Mr. Spencer's attempt to find a basis for ethics, and at his exposition of the use of the principle of "causality" in ethics. All systems of ethics, save his own, are, he finds, distinguished by the absence of the use of the principle of causation, or by an inadequate use of it. We suppose that ethical writers would admit the charge and justify it. They believe that to treat the human world as no more than a chain of efficient causality, is at the outset to make ethics impossible. Ethics is possible, if we can rise to a point of view which goes beyond mere sequence, and can reasonably hope to reach a teleological interpretation of the facts of human life. A kingdom of means and ends is something altogether different from a kingdom of causes and effects, and the attempt to make conscious life subject to mere physical causation must necessarily fail.

Mr.
Spencer's
attempt to
find a basis
for morality
in the
physical
order.

Following out his attempt to apply causation to moral life, he seeks to find a basis for morals in the physical order. So far as the four chapters which set forth the physical view, the biological view, the psychological view, and the sociological view are concerned, we have to say of them that what is true in them is common-place, and what is new in them is not true. The truth in them is

the common-place that man has a body, that he is a living creature, that he has an emotional and rational nature, and that he is a social being; but the attempt to find a basis for morality in these respective orders of being must be frankly set down as failure. Our waning space warns us to be brief, and we shall compress what we have still to say. The main stress of his argument is laid on the fact that

His attempt
a failure.

“the connexion between acts and effects is independent of any alleged theological or political authority.”

Quite so in many cases, but not so in others. His illustrations are, if we tie the main artery we stop most of the blood going to a limb, if we bleed a man, if a man has cancer of the œsophagus, if we forcibly prevent a man from eating, if we pay him for his work in bad coin, in all these cases, and in others mentioned by Mr. Spencer, the man is disabled, and

Confusion
of non-
moral and
moral
agents.

“the mischief results, apart from any divine command or political enactment, or moral intuition.”

Again we say quite so. But when we come to the passing of moral judgment on any of these physical processes and results, we must discriminate, and must recognise an element not contained in the physical order. The tying of an artery has always the result of causing disablement to a limb. But why was the artery tied? If it is done for a beneficent end, then the act is not condemned.

The physical result caused by a cancer may be in no wise different from the result caused by a robber, who deprives a man of food. But we must go beyond the physical order in order to find a ground for the reprobation we pass on the conduct of the robber. Physical causation cannot account for the facts of the moral consciousness, nor does duty, responsibility, and remorse find a fitting place in the physical order. We must have regard to the motives and the intentions of the agent before we approve or condemn his action.

Grounds of moral judgment not to be found in the chain of physical causes and effects.

The mistake made by Mr. Spencer consists in not seeing that the ground of moral judgment lies elsewhere than in the causal connection of the events to which it refers. The life of a man is destroyed by a bullet, and the momentum of a bullet was caused by the explosive power of gunpowder, confined within the narrow space of a gun barrel. The gunpowder is of such a nature as to explode when a percussion cap is struck, and we may trace the links of causation further back to the nature of the atoms, and their chemical combination, and to the nature of guns, and so on. But to trace the links of causation in the physical order does not enable us to recognise something which entered into the midst of them, and was the real factor in the case. The touch of the murderous finger on the trigger is the cause of the murder, and then we are lifted up to the recogni-

tion of causes of another kind. We are in the region of motive and intention, among facts of a moral order, which demand another kind of treatment.

Facts of a moral order demand different treatments.

We have already dealt with the contribution which, in the hands of Mr. Spencer, Biology makes to Ethics. All we shall now say is this, that the command of biology is based on the assumptions that guidance by present pleasures and pains has succeeded. We are told that—

“the vital functions accept no apologies on the ground that neglect of them was unavoidable, or that the reason for neglect was noble. The direct and indirect sufferings caused by non-conforming to the laws of life are the same whatever induces the non-conformity.”

So we must have regard to the immediate results. But the whole question turns, not on the sufferings, but on the purpose and aim which induced the non-conformity. The laws of life as furnished by biology may come into conflict with the laws of the higher life of man, and when they do so, it becomes the duty of a man to incur the sufferings caused by a disregard to the laws of biological life. The point, however, on which we now insist is, that the command of biology is to be guided by immediate results, and the teaching of psychology, as interpreted by Mr. Spencer is

Discordant voices of biology and psychology.

“the subjection of immediate sensations to the idea of sensations to come.”

and the recognition that feelings

“have authorities proportioned to the degrees in which they are removed by their complexity and their ideality from simple sensations and appetites.”

Are we to be biological or psychological in our Ethics?

Are we, then, to be biological in our ethics or psychological? Under which king shall we serve? Are we to accept the teaching of biology, and seek those things which are immediately present, and think it to be absurd to recognise only the remote results of conduct? or are we to disregard biology, and insist on the superior wisdom of psychology? If we do so, what becomes of our proposed deduction of morality from the laws of life and conditions of existence, and what are we to do in the meantime, while the need presses on us, to obtain a scientific guide to conduct? Shall we wait until biology and psychology have been reconciled to one another, and are agreed to speak with one voice, and recommend one principle of conduct? The vacuum must be filled, but the sciences Mr. Spencer calls in to help to fill it have disagreed, and their dispute is likely to issue in the widening of the vacuum. Meanwhile we shall content ourselves for a little longer with the old Ethics and their sanctions.

The sociological view.

There remains the sociological view, which perhaps may help to reconcile the discordant utterances of biology and psychology.

“From the sociological point of view, ethics become nothing else than a definite account of the forms of conduct that are

fitted to the associated state, in such wise that the lives of each and all may be the greatest possible, alike in length and breadth" (p. 133).

It is to be remembered, however, that on the same principle—

"there is a supposable formula for the activities of each species, which, could it be drawn out, would constitute a system of morality for that species."

If we follow the ascending scale, we have a series of systems of morality, corresponding to the position a species occupies in the ladder of evolution. If we follow man from his pre-social stage to man in his social stage, we have at the new position to include an added factor in the formula. This addition affords a contrast to all systems of morality supposed to be applicable to lower species. It might have been supposed that we should find a striking likeness between all systems of morality. But we find, instead, a decided contrast. Man is the only species which has "a formula for complete life." It is very strange that this should be the case, seeing that the formula is only the outcome of adaptation to the environment, physical, biological, social. For other animals are also social; at all events

Ascending
scale of
systems of
morals.

Man alone
has "a
formula
for complete
life."

"there are inferior species which display considerable degrees of sociality."

Why, then, should the morality applicable to them be so different from the morality of man? Is not

Inadequacy and failure of the sociological view.

the additional factor of such a kind as to necessitate a view of morality altogether new? In which case, we ask again, what has become of the proposed attempt to deduce morality from the laws of life and conditions of existence?

The ultimate end, even on the sociological view, is the individual happiness. In order, however, the more effectively to attain that end,

“the life of the social organism, must, as an end, rank above the lives of its unity.”

Personal pleasure still the ultimate end: impossible to deduce morality from this.

We cheerfully admit that the welfare of society as a whole ought to be put in the foreground, but we see no reason for the admission on the ground set forth by Mr. Spencer. If my duties to the social organism have, as their ultimate ground, the aim to secure for myself the greatest amount of pleasure and the least of pain, what means are there to constrain me to my duty when the two ends conflict?

“Living together arose because, on the average, it proved more advantageous to each than living apart.”

Let us suppose one to reason in the following fashion, what answer would Mr. Spencer find. I conceive it to my advantage to live apart. I find that others keep the sunshine from me, and my only request to my fellow-men is that made by Diogenes to Alexander. There is no answer to this position on any Utilitarian hypothesis. It is no answer to the difficulty to say that the good time is coming when

‘the relations, at present familiar to us, will be inverted ; and, instead of each maintaining his own claims, others will maintain his claims for him.’

And this brings us again to Mr. Spencer’s favourite method of escape from difficulty—a method which cannot be allowed to any moralist. We are moral now. We have a consciousness of right and wrong. We feel moral obligation, and it is a mere evasion of the question to say that there will come a time when we shall be so moral as to have no consciousness of right and wrong, and so have any feeling of moral obligation.

It is not to be denied that in these chapters on the physical, the biological, the psychological, and sociological views of morality there are many wise observations on nature, man, and society ; nor do we affirm that they are unprofitable reading. On the contrary, there is much in them which deserves the deepest consideration of all men. Our contention is that the observations made and the views promulgated are irrelevant to the thesis propounded by Mr. Spencer. He has set himself to explain morality, and to devise rules of conduct for man as he now is. He has substituted for morality something which is non-moral, and the rules of conduct are not for man as he is, but for an ideal man in a state of society which is non-existent. His *Data of Ethics* is another *Utopia*.

The irrelevant nature of the argument used by Mr. Spencer.

This brings us to the last point we shall consider

Absolute
and relative
ethics.

at the present time. We mean the distinction drawn by Mr. Spencer between absolute and relative ethics. At the outset we may say that it is by no means clear how, on Mr. Spencer's view, such a distinction is possible, nor how absolute ethics may precede relative ethics, except on the supposition that the end is implied in the process. When Mr. Spencer says

"that ascertainment of the actual truths has been made possible only by pre-ascertainment of certain ideal truths" (p. 220),

he raises the question of how the human mind can know the ideal before the actual. On the hypothesis of evolution this is clearly impossible; for it pre-supposes that the evolution is simply the realisation of a prior idea involved at the beginning, to be evolved at the end of the series of changes. From our point of view we have no objection to such a conception, but it is fatal to the theory of Mr. Spencer.

Illustration
from the
progress of
mechanics.

He seeks to make his meaning plain by the progress of mechanics, from its empirical to its rational form. We may accept his account of the genesis of abstract mechanics, and need not criticize it too curiously:—

"By easy and rude experiences there were inductively reached, vague but practically true notions respecting the over-balancing of bodies, the motions of missiles, the actions of levers."

This may be accepted as, so far, a true account of the matter. But the formulated, ideal mechanics

must be of a kind which will truly interpret the first rude experiences of the race, and not contradict them. They must be consistent with universal experience. In our ideal mechanics we may assume a lever which is absolutely rigid, a fulcrum without breadth, and the weight of the body to be moved to be collected at a certain point. Abstract mechanics does assume this, knowing all the while that as a matter of fact, we have no such levers or fulcrums in nature. Still the demonstrations are true as far as they go. But even abstract mechanics cannot dispense with space, and time, and body, and it assumes those intuitions which are universal and necessary to the human mind. It cannot move a step without them. The intuitions of space and number are drawn on at every step. The inference drawn by Mr. Spencer is, therefore, by no means plain that in a similar fashion—

Supposed
analogy
between
mechanics
and ethics.

“by easy and rude experiences there were inductively reached, vague but partially true notions respecting the effects of man’s behaviour on themselves, on one another, and on society’ (p. 220).

And the reason is because the cases are not parallel. By this we mean that in the hands of Mr. Spencer what corresponds in ethics to absolute mechanics is in contradiction to the moral intuitions of the human race. If he could set forth an abstract mechanics, the conclusions of which would show that the intuitions of space and time would disappear, he would accomplish what he has professed

The cases
not parallel.

to demonstrate in ethics, when he predicts a time when the sense of obligation will disappear. Again we say, that we do not deny a distinction between absolute and relative ethics, we say that Mr. Spencer has no right to make the distinction. If he had been able to show how the sense of obligation and the power of discerning right from wrong were present and operative at every stage of the process, as the intuitions of space and time are present and operative at every stage in the evolution of abstract mechanics, he would have done something bearing on the proof of his thesis. Instead we have a categorical denial of the moral intuitions, and a prophecy of their disappearance.

Mr. Spencer confesses that there is no guidance in relative ethics.

In his zeal for absolute ethics he is quite prepared to assert that relative ethics can afford no guidance to man. He affirms that—

“throughout a considerable part of conduct, no guiding principle, no method of estimation, enables us to say whether a proposed course is even relatively right; as causing, proximately and remotely, specially and generally, the greatest surplus of good over evil” (p. 268).

Let the reader translate this into the language of mechanics, and see how the parallel between mechanics and ethics again fails. His illustrations of the uncertainty of knowing right from wrong, all turn on the difficulty of calculating contingencies. One case is that of a tenant farmer, whose political principles prompt him to vote in opposition to his landlord. The way in which Mr. Spencer

balances the pros and cons would be amusing, if it were not so sad—

“We have to recognise the fact that in countless such cases no one can decide by which of the alternative cases the least wrong is likely to be done” (p. 267).

Here is in truth, no moral guidance, and this is demonstrated by the only morality which can result from the balancings of pleasures and pains. Ordinary men, who believe in God and in moral law, would at once say that the tenant farmer ought to follow his principles, and leave the issues to God.

Nor does absolute ethics afford guidance to man. Before its rules can come into action there must come a time when right action may be done without leaving a trace of pain anywhere or to any person.

No guidance in absolute ethics.

“The philosophical moralist treats,” we are told by Mr. Spencer, “solely of the straight man. He determines the properties of the straight man, describes how the straight man comports himself; shows in what relationship he stands to other straight men; shows how a community of straight men is constituted. Any deviation from strict rectitude he is compelled wholly to ignore. It cannot be admitted into his premisses without vitiating all his conclusions. A problem in which a *crooked* man forms one of the elements is insoluble by him” (p. 271-2).

The philosophical moralist treats of the straight man.

But, according to the analogy to mechanics, we can only get the straight man by abstraction from the crooked man; and, still adhering to the analogy, every concrete mechanical problem can be solved approximately by the methods of mechanics. Why

should not the problem of practical morality be solved after the same fashion? We have been arguing here on the supposition that Mr. Spencer's analogy between mechanics and ethics holds good. But to us the analogy is very misleading. The contrast between absolute and relative ethics by no means corresponds to the contrast between abstract and concrete. To say so would be to mistake the ethical problem altogether. The categorical imperative is the expression, not of any general and abstract truth, but of an absolute and universal command, which claims to rule the inward life and outward action of man by governing all his desires, intentions, and aims. It is an absolute command, a law of inherent and unconditional obligation, which sets aside all considerations of prudence, personal affection, and general utility, and asserts its own supreme authority over all other precepts and injunctions whatsoever. A good will is an end in itself; and a good will, grounded on reverence for moral law, is good in itself and for itself alone, irrespective of any outward consequences, irrespective also of anything useful, or pleasant, or desirable, irrespective of fitness for any higher end, for this is the highest end.

The categorical imperative not an abstract truth, but a universal command.

We have a real guide to conduct.

If this be so, then we have a real guide to conduct. We are not constrained with Mr. Spencer to say that we cannot tell what duty is, and are not shut up to choose the least wrong. If we

recognise that right has not been built up out of pleasurable experiences, but has a majesty and a sanction in itself, then the absolute claim it has on us may be recognised and acted on, whatsoever the consequences may be.

We submit, then, that Mr. Spencer has failed to account for the facts of our moral consciousness, and that his system confessedly supplies no guidance to moral conduct. We need not consider further his conception of the straight man in a straight society. At present Mr. Spencer is conscious of an unfriendly environment. He has, by various iterations, to force alien conceptions on reluctant minds. He does not expect that "his conclusions will meet with any general acceptance," nor do we. But his own experience of a great mission and calling in the world ought to have made him reflect on the conclusions he has reached. Taking for the moment the estimate he has formed of his system of philosophy, looking at the persistency with which he has forced his conceptions on reluctant minds, and having regard to the anxiety he manifests to provide a scientific basis for morality, we might have expected from him a larger and a more generous estimate of the value of the work of individual man for man. He has steadfastly held his own, and has sought to benefit man—for of the nobleness of his purpose there can be no doubt. Why, then, should he not recognise in man what he finds

The Ethics of evolution misrepresent the facts of moral consciousness and fails to afford guidance to man.

in so large a scale in himself? Why not take account of the force of example as a moral motive, and of love to man as the great elevating force over human life? If the existence of Mr. Spencer and his work has been possible in an unfriendly environment, why should we not go further, and say, in opposition to his teaching, that the existence of a perfect man and an imperfect society is quite possible? No doubt he says categorically that

“the co-existence of a perfect man and an imperfect society is impossible.”

Ethics
demand a
perfect
example.

But we recall to mind Plato's description of the just man. We quote from Jowett's Introduction to the *Republic* :—

“And now let us frame an ideal of the just and unjust. Imagine the unjust man to be master of his craft, seldom making mistakes and easily correcting them, having gifts of money, speech, strength, the greatest villain bearing the highest character ; and at his side let us place the just in his nobleness and simplicity, being not seeming, without name or reward, clothed in his justice only, the best of men who is thought to be the worst, and let him die as he has lived. I might add (but I would rather put the rest into the mouth of the panygerists of injustice—they will tell you) that the just man will be scourged, racked, bound, will have his eyes put out, and will at last be crucified, and all this because he ought to have preferred seeming to being.”¹

The picture
of Plato has
had an
historical
fulfilment.

This picture which passed before the glowing imagination of Plato, has had an historical fulfilment. And while the memories of Gethsemane linger in the mind, Mr. Spencer will find it vain to tell man that

¹ Jowett's *Plato*, vol. iii., p. 21.

“conduct which has any concomitant of pain in any painful consequence is partially wrong.”

We find the criterion of right and wrong elsewhere, and we also find that by the confession of all, a perfect Man did once appear in an imperfect society, and gave Himself to the work of redeeming men from sin and misery, of showing them what human life ought to be, and may become; and of making a new world in which a perfect society may safely, gladly dwell. He showed man a more excellent way, not the old way of self-assertion, or of the rule of strength, or of having regard to pleasure, but the new way of returning good for evil, of bearing the cross, and of knowing the blessedness of sorrow. Christ's moral teaching stands in perfect contrast to the teaching of Mr. Spencer, different in origin, in method, in results, and in sanction, and we have the testimony of John Stuart Mill to the fact that no higher standard of living is conceivable than to live so that Christ shall approve your life. Those who have this as motive and reward, are not conscious of the vacuum which Mr. Spencer is so anxious to fill.

A perfect man in the midst of an imperfect society.

Christ's teaching a contrast to Mr. Spencer's.

In the life and work and teaching of Christ, we learn the true interpretation of the fact of our moral life. From Him we learn the real meaning of moral obligation, of our powerlessness to fulfil it, and of the pain, anguish and remorse, which we feel because we cannot do the things which we

Christ interprets our moral life.

How to
become
what we
ought to be.

would. How shall we become what we feel we ought to be? We need to be placed in right relations to the supreme moral law, we need a strength beyond our own to lift us to the level of a holy life, and through Christ and by union with Him we obtain what we need. Why should we be afraid to say, that from Christ we have received the true ideal of moral life, as from Christ we receive the strength to live up to it? He has atoned for our sins, He has deepened and cleansed all the moral convictions, He has embodied the highest ideal of a perfect moral life, and He has poured into human life a tide of living strength, which is making this world a world of righteousness, purity, and peace. We make no rash prophecy, we are simply stating a fact of human experience which may be ascertained by ordinary historical inquiry, when we say that, whoso has the life and teaching of Christ, has enough for life and guidance. He has a motive for living, an aim for life, strength by the Holy Spirit to bear and do, and hope to crown and reward his efforts. The moral life inspired by Christ, and guided by Him, has also the surest scientific truth; and it will become more apparent as time rolls on, and experience widens, that Christian Ethics are the only true scientific Ethics.

Christian
ethics.

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